THE

TRINKET.

A

NOVEL.

BY A LADY.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE TRINKET.

LETTER I.

Miss SEATON *to Lady* ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

INDEED, my Eliza, it is impossible to overcharge the picture; lady Amelia is truly original; and her swain had furnished a fairer subject for romance, than any wandering hero of antiquity. Acton Hall, our present habitation, you would swear had been for many centuries the favourite

vourite receptacle of diſtreſſed damſels. A mote, a draw-bridge, and a maſtiff have continued for ages a protection to the fair inhabitants. The walls are overgrown with ivy; nor are the veſtiges of time leſs conſpicuous within the manſion. "You are then in poſſeſſion of the very retirement you wiſhed; your ſituation perfectly romantic."—True, my Eliza; and ſolitude's the nurſe of grief.—This awfull ſtilneſs—the diſtant waterfall—the crickets dirge; what do they but rouze reflection, and renew ideas; alas! too fondly cheriſhed: ſurely my friend, 'tis lawful to indulge the virtuous ſorrow, to recollect the beſt of parents—to recall his dying words, when preſſing my hand to his ſcarce beating heart, "My Emma, ſaid the expiring ſaint, you have ſtill a father," and ſunk lifeleſs on his pillow. Vainly have you endeavoured to diſcloſe ſome latent meaning; your wandering fancy,

fancy, ever on the wing in ſearch of happineſs for Emma, muſt ſtill return unſatisfied from every fond excurſion. You know, my dear girl, even at ſchool, how widely different our tempers; I never conſidered things fluctuating on the ſtream of time as proper objects of attention; not able to unriddle the ſecrets of futurity, I borrowed careleſſneſs from myſtery: and though I might frequently loſe the pleaſure of anticipated delight, I knew not to torment myſelf with fancied dreams of ſorrow. I am certain you will, as uſual, laugh at what you term my want of penetration; be it ſo, for I confeſs I ſee no other alluſion but to the hand of Omnipotence. Yes, my much loved parent, your Emma has ſtill a Father, exempt from ſickneſs, ſorrow, change, or death; it is that Father, who raiſed me friends in misfortune, and taught content to rear her

ſtandard even in the regions of affliction.

But you are, perhaps, impatient to be introduced to my young friend; you ſay you are prepared to love her for her kindneſs to your Emma; yet, believe me, were you acquainted with the engaging girl, her unaſſuming merit would gain the greateſt ſhare of that friendſhip, you kindly flatter me I have long poſſeſſed unrivalled.—In Fanny Sydney is all the ſweet domeſtic ſoftneſs, the amiable ſolicitude for others happineſs, which can ſpring from a heart, tender, benevolent, never agitated by diſappointment, or triumphantly exulting in ſuperior charms: ſhe is naturally ſentimental; in converſing with her, a thouſand new ideas agreeably ſurpriſe you, and a more than female ſoftneſs receives additional graces from the ſprightly ſallies of an untutored imagination.—Pity this amiable girl ſhould be ſo entirely depen-

dependent on the caprices of lady Amelia: theſe old maiden aunts ſtill continue to their female expectants the ſame tyrannic auſterity, which they would perſuade us was neceſſary to check the ardors of an adoring crowd. —Mr. Sydney is ſhortly expected; he is about three and twenty, and in poſſeſſion of an unincumbered eſtate of eight hundred a-year. Lady Acton doats upon her nephew, and declares him, if he marries with her approbation, ſole heir to her immenſe wealth. Fanny calls—I fly—to admire a neſt of wood pigeons or Friezland hen.

LETTER II.

LUCIUS SEVIGNY, *Eſq.* *to* AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, *Eſq.*

WILL you have the goodneſs Sydney to read what I ſhall write to you, that I may have the conſola-

tion of having communicated a few ideas to one rational being; for, upon my honour, except Belvidera Finchley, there is not ſuch a thing within twenty miles of this place.—And yet, that Belvidera has ſpoiled the only rational plan of amuſement, my genius, darkened by theſe venerable ſhades, has atchieved ſince it has been enveloped here.—Yes faith, there is a very pretty girl in the neighbourhood, whom I had juſt marked for my own; as I conceived by her diſtreſſed circumſtances and pallid looks, that her ſeducer, actuated by ſome jealous lovefit, had boarded her in the village.—My plan went on divinely, the echoes had learnt the ſoft ſounds of Sevigny, and all had been well; when the above-mentioned gentlewoman having heard of my viſits, by her ſober lectures, and her goodneſs—I think Patty calls it—overturned the whole fabric I had been rearing, perſuaded the rich

Miſs

Miſs ſhe lives with, to take her into her houſe, and I cannot tell you what. —Convinced the girls would expect me to look fooliſh the next time I accoſted them, I determined on diſappointing them,—and meeting Belvidera on horſeback, accompanied but by a ſervant, "Ah! my dear miſs Finchley, ſaid I, how fortunate this *rencontre*, I have been dying theſe two days to congratulate you on the new office you have undertaken—confeſſor —and let me ſee—protector too, of *virgin innocence*," with a ſarcaſtic accent.

"How, replied ſhe, upon my word I don't underſtand you." "No, I dare ſay you don't—why yes, I always thought the Magdalen houſe a very pretty inſtitution, but the poor girl, I ſuppoſe,—no friends belonging to the charity."—

"If Mr. Sevigny, you mean the pleaſure I have been ſo fortunate to

acquire Miſs Darcy, in the company of —. "Oh lord! Oh lord! I beg your pardon, cried I, I beg your pardon; far be it from me to leſſen ſo exquiſite a ſatisfaction—good morning to you, I did not before totally comprehend your good fortune."—And turning down a lane which led me home, was met by my ſervant, who told me there was a perſon waiting for me with a letter.—Judge my aſtoniſhment when, on breaking the ſeal, I found it ſigned by my old ſchool-fellow Harlowe: figure to yourſelf my feelings, when I there ſaw it was his ſiſter whom I had endeavoured to ſeduce from the before unforſaken paths of virtue. It ſeems the girl had, for the only imprudent thing ſhe had ever done, quitted her mother's houſe, who was trying to prevail on her to marry a rich old fellow, but ſhe had fixed her heart upon a handſome young one; whoſe uncle however, would not let

him

him marry without a thouſand pounds, to clear a debt he contracted in the folly of a youthful frolick, that done, he would give him up a farm of three hundred a-year: the thing was impoſſible. —Mrs. Harlowe had but a ſcanty jointure; and her ſon, honeſt Jack, found a commiſſion in the army brought with it as many expences as it could ſupply. Importuned by her lovers, teized by an avaricious old woman — ſhe quitted them all, and retired to that place where my evil genius led me. Harlowe's letter was to tell me the ſituation in which he had found affairs on his return from foreign quarters: that from a friend of his ſiſter's he had learned her retreat—recollected it was in our neighbourhood—knew me ſo generous I would undertake to prevail on her to return to her friends, who would welcome her with rapture, &c. &c. Fired with gratitude to the noble Finchley, I ordered my horſes, and

on my arrival at Mr. Darcy's, had the good fortune to meet her in the hall: the ſenſations of Jaffier ruſhed upon my mind, and ſeizing her hand, "Oh, Belvidera, doubly I'm a beggar; undone by fortune, and in debt to thee." Obſerving my unfeigned emotions, ſhe ſtarted, "Good heavens, Mr. Sevigny,"—I put an end to her aſtoniſhment by giving her the letter. But I ſhall ſurfeit you with narration, ſuffice it, I feel for the firſt time the deficiency of fortune; I muſt hit upon ſome means to make thoſe happy, whom my gaiety had, but for Miſs Finchley, before now rendered forever miſerable. As to my lady grandmother, ſhe has not an idea beyond a church—or a card table—I dare ſay ſhe would pray very heartily to God, that he would bleſs Miſs Harlowe with a thouſand pounds; nor would ſhe cheat her of a red ace—nay, perhaps even of a matadore, for the Indies.

dies. But to give her the ſum—the Lord help ſuch narrow ſouls.—

LETTER III.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, *Eſq.* *to* LUCIUS SEVIGNY.

London.

FYE on you, Sevigny, you injure my friendſhip, to know my ability and not command it. I incloſe a draught on my banker for a thouſand pounds, which I inſiſt on your making uſe of as you pleaſe: nor fear diſtreſſing me; lady Amelia laviſhes upon me the gifts of fortune to profuſion; and I conſider myſelf as unſpeakably indebted to you, for the ſatisfaction of having aſſiſted any one ſo nearly connected with a young fellow I always thought ſo highly of as Harlowe. As

to the girl, I am only aſtoniſhed Miſs Finchley popp'd in time enough; ſolitude and ſuch a lover as Sevigny—I thought no garriſon could have ſuſtained the ſiege a week. I am afraid the ſober matrimonial ſwain will appear but hum-drum after it.—A propos hum-drum—Really I am aſtoniſhed you have the patience to ſubmit to that *en famille* perpetually. We have the moſt divine *routine* you can conceive, and wiſh continually your wit and elegance of converſation; I know of nothing elſe to render it complete. But, after all, do be ſo good to ſtay where you are, ſuch an animated fellow as you—ah, we have all in our turn found the impoſſibility of contending with you.—*Mon dieu*, Charles Willmott, and another or two, have been waiting for me this half hour; but I could not reconcile myſelf to the idea of deferring for one poſt, my juſt re-

reproaches, for your want of confidence in,

Dear Sevigny,

Your ever faithful

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY.

LETTER IV.

Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK, to Miſs SEATON.

NOW prithee, child, from what new diſcovered colony was thy laſt letter dated? a draw-bridge, a maſtiff, and old maid; I was abſolutely in the vapours: "Here Betty bring the ſal volatile, and order this paper to be printed in the next marvellous chronicle:" but at the glimpſe of a beau near the bottom of your page, away flew vapours, eſſences, and and ſpleen. Your Paſtor Fido is, I ſuppoſe, by this time arrived: well,

heaven

heaven be praiſed, this is as it ſhould be; that pretty face muſt again try its power in charming; and let me tell you, Emma, when you are Mrs. Sydney, and have pulled down thoſe old mouldering walls, hung the maſtiff, and the old maid, Acton Hall will be a perfect Arcadia. Prithee, my good girl, try your hand at deſcription; there is ſomething extremely laughable in the well painted follies of the fortunate, and I have known one of theſe envied beings ſhed more tears for the loſs of a linnet, a coach-horſe, or a tippet, than my Emma, when misfortune, like a peſtilential blaſt, ſwept off her opening bloom of happineſs. The caſtle is at preſent crowded with inhabitants, yet, I dare not declare myſelf ſurrounded by companions; notwithſtanding Mr. Beauclerk is perpetually diſcovering ſome agreeable attraction, of latent good quality in every individual. Surely, my dear, it

is a mark of underſtanding, to view every object in the moſt agreeable light, and there is a certain elevated benevolence neceſſary to behold what is amiable in others, which little minds want. Never did your friend ſo much feel her inferiority to be unmoved with repeated endeavours to divert, as denotes inſenſibility; but we are ſeldom pleaſed when we are made to feel the weight of obligations—when we are given to underſtand we ſhould be ſenſible of them; and, "My Eliza are you not yet happy;" has diſſipated many pleaſing viſions.—"Good God, are theſe the ſentiments of my friend —and can ſhe be thus ungrateful?"—Be not aſtoniſhed, Emma; you, who are uſed to trace every paſſion to its ſource, cannot be ignorant that the higheſt pleaſure ariſes from accidental occurrences, and is never farther off than when we meet to ſeek it.—Heavens, what a diſſertation! ſufficient, indeed,

indeed, to baniſh the goddeſs I attempt to diſregard.—We are to have a dance to-night in the ſaloon; moſt of the neighbouring gentry are invited, and we have here lord M—, Mr. Elford, Sir Charles Waybridge, Miſs Montagues, lady Caroline, Miſs Lennox, and your old acquaintance Mrs. Dixon.—Fye, Emma, what a deſcription of my intended aunt, "Proud, envious, and deceitful."—Bleſs me, child, with what eyes didſt thou regard her; the very picture of humility; ſhe would ſtoop even to worſhip the ground I tread on: I have heard her contradict herſelf twenty times in a breath, in compliance with lady Caroline; and who ſhall ſay ſhe is not above that low envy, which delights in depreciating thoſe of her ſex, who boaſt ſuperior graces; ſince none more clearly perceives, or more readily admits their charms; but our Mrs. Dixon carries her juſtice ſtill higher, and wiſely

wiſely conſidering theſe fair ones ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed by the ſmiles of nature, ſhe reſerves her favours for the aukward, the rich, the fortunate; nor is there a ſpark of envy in this; ſhe is of opinion that beauty every where finds ſhelter. I am interrupted —Adieu.

LETTER V.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY to Sir GEORGE DANVERS.

WELL—if I had but a good benefice in my gift, I'd make it a condition, when the reverend father was introduced, that he ſhould inſert in the Litany,

From maiden aunts, and antiquated manſions, Good Lord deliver us.

And yet in truth Danvers, green fields and ſhady groves are not the odious things I thought them; the ſame old gen-

gentlewoman has planned, and my kind ſtars have perfected, the moſt pleaſurable ſcheme.—But to methodiſe my thoughts — a thing that, George, in which you muſt confeſs me uncommonly ſucceſsful: it was about eight o'clock when I arrived, of courſe a delightful evening,—the country

" A ſnow of bloſſoms, and a wild of flowers."

Fanny knew me at a diſtance, and ran out to meet me, " My dear brother! how am I rejoiced to ſee you."—We embraced, and ſhe conducted me to the dreſſing room—lady Acton received me with pleaſure; and I was liſtening to my ſiſter's entertaining prattle, when an elegant female entered the apartment; a ſmall chip hat ſlightly ſhaded the moſt animated countenance. Fanny roſe, and taking me by the hand, " Miſs Seaton, give me leave to introduce my brother;" —" Sydney, receive my friend." I approached to ſalute her, muttered

ſome-

ſomething of unexpected happineſs—ſtole a look in the glaſs—the diſorder of my hair—with the agreeable ſurprize, had given an additional glow to my complexion—yet the gypſy was unmoved with my appearance, and received my compliment with great unconcern:—it was not to be endured; and vowing vengeance on the little ruſtic, I threw myſelf upon the ſofa, complained of being fatigued—the roads were intolerable—ſolicitude for my aunt's health, and the apprehenſion that too much retirement might affect her ſpirits, had induced me to attend her; but had I known ſhe had ſuch agreeable company, (bowing to miſs Seaton) my return had been for a ſhort time retarded. Lady Amelia inquired where my tormenting inſenſible had been ſtrolling, "in the grove, madam, I never ſaw it more delightful."—"And your reflections, Miſs Seaton, cried

cried I; come, confeſs the happy object that engroſſed them." "The object that claimed my attention, ſir, has no connection with the epithet you beſtow,"—ſhe ſaid, and vaniſhed.—Mighty prudent this, and her flight a modeſt confeſſion that ſhe felt her danger. O, you are certainly all impatience, to learn what peculiar beauties this fair one boaſts; but really George, it is impoſſible I ſhould inform you, for in the truly comprehenſive phraſe, "She beggars all deſcription."

"When ſhe appears, all nature hails the ſpring,
And warbling birds their ſportive carrols ſing."

Ha, ha, ha! admirable.

"Like Phœbus ſung the no leſs amorous boy,
Like Daphne ſhe, as lovely and as coy."

If her ſentiments are as delicate as her form, I ſhall conſider my heart a tribute to her merit; but to the impreſſions of mere beauty, no Stoic can be

be more inſenſible.—Fanny informs me the fair unfortunate has lately loſt a father, and with him each flattering expectation. Forced through ſome unaccountable fatality to change his name, and fly his country, with all the money he poſſeſſed, he purchaſed annuities, which ceaſed with his life. He was naturally expenſive; and fondly doating on his daughter, he ſpared no expence on her education, her houſe, her dreſs, or her attendants; they lived up to their little income, and on his deceaſe miſs Seaton found herſelf deſtitute. Fanny flew to her, on hearing the melancholy news: an affectionate friendſhip had ſubſiſted between theſe amiable girls from infancy. She endeavoured to prevail on the dear ſufferer to quit the houſe of mourning; but all entreaties were ineffectual, and ſhe continued there till the remains of her parent were depoſited in the grave: the

friends

friends have been ſince inſeparable. Heavens! you may diſcover my ſolitary ſituation in my ſtyle—how ſtrangely unlike your

SYDNEY.

LETTER VI.

Miſs SEATON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

THIS redoubtable hero is at length arrived, and lady Eliza once more miſtaken. Pray, my dear friend, of what combuſtible materials did you imagine your Emma's heart compoſed, that it ſhould catch fire at every "light gay meteor of a ſpark?" I grant Mr. Sydney handſome, his perſon nobly engaging, and in his converſation, is "humour, wit, a native air and grace;" and yet I behold him approach with indifference; he leaves me, and I do not regret his abſence; he reaſons, and I can think his princi-

ples ill founded, and his concluſions erroneous; I can be ſerious when he laughs, and laugh when he is ſerious. Sir Harry Edgerton, a particular intimate of Mr. Sydney's, has been with us ſome days: it would be difficult to conceive a more prepoſſeſſing appearance; he carries a letter of recommendation in his countenance; and it is impoſſible to look at, and not eſteem him. His addreſs is eaſy and unaffected; and his converſation, always inſtructive, is enlivened with a certain native chearfulneſs. Lady Amelia aſſured me laſt night, this man, in my idea ſo perfect, had yet a fault: Ah, my Eliza! can then exceſs of virtue "riſe to faults," and the exuberance of humanity become a failing?

"Sincere himſelf, and too ſecure to find
The common boſom, like his own, ſincere."

His heart and time are become the property of the unhappy; and diſtreſs

is an indiſputable title to his fortune. From the peculiar tenderneſs of hi manners, one would imagine he had felt the ſorrow he relieves; and there is an engaging ſoftneſs in his carriage when he addreſſes a woman, that ſpeaks our ſex the cauſe of his affliction. Since his arrival, our little coterie is become infinitely more intereſting. Mr. Sydney is extremely attentive to him, and every day ſeems to increaſe their friendſhip: could you have believed it poſſible, this young man, all frolic, life, and gaiety, declares he never is ſo happy as in his Edgerton's company. Where ſhall we find a clearer proof, that parity of inclinations is not eſſential to the union of ſouls; and that the ſtrongeſt friendſhips are cemented between people of contrary diſpoſitions:— Sydney's exceſſive vivacity is tempered by the ſentimental converſation of his aſſociate; and Sir Harry's inſtructive chear-

chearfulneſs appears with additional charms, contraſted with the levity of his friend. Lady Amelia's ſwain thought proper to leave the neighbourhood upon her nephew's arrival: ſtrange, that a woman of her age ſhould give the ſlighteſt encouragement; yet Fanny aſſures me he has long ſighed at her feet; and as nurſes terrify their charge with bugbears, lady Amelia liſtens to the wretch ſhe deſpiſes, to quicken her Sydney's aſſiduity. Though gay, luxurious, expenſive, and convinced his ſlender patrimony cannot ſupport him in the life he loves, he ridicules the old lady's peculiarities, and laughs at her admirer. We paſs the "roſy boſom'd hours" in variety of rural pleaſures, and have the moſt enchanting concerts in the grotto. Miſs Sydney is perfect miſtreſs of muſic, and ſtrikes the harpſichord with great taſte; I frequently accompany her with the

guittar, Sir Harry plays the violoncello, and Mr. Sydney excells upon the flute. We are preparing for one this evening; Lady Amelia is engaged; and Fanny, in *gaitée de cœur*, "warbles her native wood-notes wild" beneath my window.—Ah, I ſee her with Sir Harry! they turn down the walk leading to the grotto; adieu, I go to join them.

In Continuation.

I expected to find Fanny and Edgerton in the grotto, and ran in with a ſprightly air, intending to chide them for leaving me.—I ſtarted, ſurpriſed to ſee Mr. Sydney alone, in a melancholy attitude: I would have withdrawn, but he aroſe, and ſeizing my hand, "Tell me, miſs Seaton, why nature formed thoſe beauties, and denied the gift that ſhould accompany them—a feeling heart?" Fortunately for me, our friends entered the grotto:

the ſurprize, his apparent thoughtfulneſs, quickly changed to the moſt animated appearance, left me incapable of reply.—"Edgerton, ſaid he, we have waited for you this age; the inſtruments are in tune, *allons donc*," and preſſing my hand, which he ſtill held, to his heart, with they gayeſt air imaginable he warbled

"You firſt have taught me how to love,
Ah teach me to be happy too."

The inſtruments were however ſoon laid down, and after a ſhort time the converſation became ſpirited on all ſides: it fell on the old topic, the levity of females, and inconſtancy in love and friendſhip. Mr. Sydney rallied our follies and trifling peculiarities with infinite pleaſantry. We proved the gentlemen overcharged the picture, and ſpoke worſe of us than we deſerved, and we triumphed over the accuſation, by leſſening the credit of the accuſers.—In all ages, Eliza, wit

and malice have been employed in inventions detrimental to the fair; and if the men are not equally ridiculed, it muſt ſurely be, that their faults are ſo conſpicuous, there is no ingenuity in expoſing them.

LETTER VII.

Miſs FINCHLEY to Miſs MELVILLE.

HEAVENS! I expire with *ennui*: thirty miles from the metropolis, and not a pretty fellow to diſſipate the melancholy reflection! commend me to your ſober damſels, who, to prove their domeſtic virtues, are eloquent in commendation of tufted groves, flowering lawns, &c. beauties, in my opinion, then only charming, when pointed out by an enlivening ſwain, who poſſeſſes the happy art of ſaying agreeable things, and ſwearing

"The whiteſt lilies to our beauties yield."

Miſs

Miſs Darcy, on the contrary, finds no failure of amuſement — good ſoul, the contemplation of that ſweet perſon never wearies. Thus lovely, ſhe would inſpire ſhe knows not what: while flattery ſoothes, it pleaſes, it delights her, it clothes in words her ſole ideas, "and gives her back the image of her mind:—a ſmart coat, a cockade, a ſhoulder knot, or a pair of red heels add irreſiſtible *douceurs* to admiration. Would you not imagine this girl, immured with her father, mother, and my ladyſhip, languiſhes for a compliment — no ſuch thing; ſelf-applauſe is a ſubſtitute, by habit become familiar. — Bleſs me, my watch informs me 'tis paſt the toilet-hour, and we are engaged this evening at lady Amelia Acton's — a moſt delectable viſit; our hopeful entertainment anecdotes of the paſt, rendered more palatable by curious reflections on the woeful degeneracy,

while "what will the world come to," is echoed from the ſage matron to the venerable ſpinſter. Ah, how I abominate the idea.

In Continuation.

Quite enlivened, child; no ſolitude, yawns, or dejection; papa looks prodigiouſly important, mama ſimpers, and miſs vows 'tis ſtrange, "'tis paſſing ſtrange"—ſtrange indeed—*A man*, Lucy,—but *ſuch* a man!—Imagine us ſeated at lady Acton's—the ſervant brought the tea-table, and it was followed by (happy Darcy) a well dreſſed youth: lady Amelia introduced her nephew; my friend alternately examined her gown, her ruffles, and her head-dreſs with apparent triumph.

Auguſtus (in company with four, let me tell you, no deſpicable females) appeared with aſtoniſhing indifference; complimented Darcy, laughed with

me,

me, and ſmiled on the inſinuating miſs Seaton: no grand Turk was ever more at eaſe, or leſs diſconcerted, than the *well-bred Sydney*. Our old folks prolonged the viſit: their Charlotte's charms muſt fix the wanderer; ſhe thought ſo too, and when the carriage was announced, ſwam off elated with her conqueſt: he handed her to it, and ſwore Acton Hall would appear a deſert in her abſence.—This was irreſiſtible, and Sydney has uſurped the *vacancy* in her diſcourſe: how fortunate were this change, could boundaries be ſet to praiſe: liſten to her commendations, and you would execrate him, as the only adequate revenge for the tedious harangue politeneſs obliged you to attend to: hear her paint the charms of love, and you would abjure the fond connection. She is a kind of echo to the paſſions, which, did not others talk of, ſhe were wholly unacquainted with, and too trifling for ſen-

timent; the feelings ſhe expreſſes are to be found only on her tongue.

This is your Belvidera's friend—ah, 'tis to prophane the title: theſe females may *love*, but, believe me, they are incapable of friendſhip. The exultation of conqueſt, and the tumult of applauſe, charms the imagination; the pride of retaining the lover raiſes us in our own opinion; we become important, and feel a partiality for him who has taught us to reſpect ourſelves.

The baſis of friendſhip is eſteem; tender, mild, diſintereſted, it derives ſtability from its foundation;—we borrow life and courage from the attachment; we endeavour to imitate perfections we admire; and we love ourſelves, becauſe we are dear to our friends. This, Lucy, is a paſſion I vainly attempt to define; but, believe me, when I think of you, my boſom burns with the tendereſt ſentiments it inſpires.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

Sir GEORGE DANVERS to AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Eſq.

" Cloe found Amyntas lying
All in tears upon the plain."

HA! ha! ha! my poor Sydney, ſighing, deſpairing, dying! faith, Auguſtus, you are a happy fellow; and while you divert yourſelf with your fair recluſe, a club of choice ſpirits lament your abſence, and a crowd of beauties languiſh for your return.—I met the ducheſs of ——, and lady Mary laſt night at Vauxhall.—" Is your friend ſtill at Acton, Sir George? Strange, that ſo very fine a fellow ſhould abſent himſelf from the Park, picquet, and theſe dear gardens, immured, I dare ſwear, with a parrot, a monkey, and a maiden aunt."

"Really, ladies, Mr. Sydney is happier than you imagine; no wonder the budding ſpring, and the more blooming charms of beauty, ſhould captivate a man of his exquiſite taſte."

"Ha! ha! ha! now, dear Sir George, pray inform us what pretty ruſtic engroſſes his attention; his aunt's milkmaid, I'll anſwer for it; or perhaps ſome tenant's daughter claims the diſtinguſhing pre-eminence?"

"Faith, madam, were I to deſcribe the charmer in Sydney's rapturous expreſſion, your ladyſhip might accuſe me of inſanity, or think I had ſcaled Olympus to catch the fair idea."

"No more excuſes, cried the ducheſs; *here*, Danvers, you may rave with impunity."

"Agreed, ſaid I, catching her hand, tell me, thou charmer, whence had'ſt thou thoſe brilliant eyes—this ſoft, white hand?"

"Wretch!

"Wretch! you were to have deſcribed Mr. Sydney's fair one."

"Impoſſible: ſhe has your height, your lips, your cheeks, but wants a thouſand nameleſs graces you can boaſt."

"And ſhe loves your friend?"

"No, madam, ſhe were then even *your* ſuperior; always ſure to pleaſe: the friendly deity arms your ſex with new alurements, points every charm, and you are doubly irreſiſtible when you have learnt to love."

"A ſcience that, Danvers, in which ſhe could not have an abler tutor: on my word, Venus ſent him into the world with full power to reduce all rebels to her ſtandard."

"And I'll lay my life, ſaid lady Mary, ſhe has not a more active general."

Hé bien mon pauvre ſolitaire!

Is the fair Seaton yet enliſted? Why, what a rout with that ſame animation:

mation: ſhew me the woman that can be inanimate and a Sydney by her ſide: her coldneſs muſt be pretended, mere affectation; and, like chapmen, who praiſe the goods they would diſpoſe of, ſhe would perſuade you her heart is invulnerable, to enhance the value when ſhe yields it.—Prithee, Sydney, introduce your charmer; the woman muſt have indeed "no character at all" who, in the time you have been acquainted, has not diſcovered ſome leading *traits*. Direct your next letter to me at L——. I ſhall go there to-morrow, and propoſe being abſent about a week. It muſt be ſomething ſuperior to the beauty of the woods that can prolong my ſtay: a ſprightly widow, a fine girl, or a ſociety of *beaux eſprit*, are three irreſiſtibles, and ſhare among them the heart, the ſoul, and perſon of

Your

GEORGE DANVERS.

LETTER IX.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY to Sir GEORGE DANVERS.

"ASTONISHING, upon my ſoul, very aſtoniſhing!"—What the devil have you got now, Sydney? methinks you cry—why faith the moſt ſurpriſing—hatch of turkies—The old damſel has been with me, in her little black bonnet, India handkerchief, and toed clogs (thoſe inſignias of her poultry-feeding department) with as much joy as that weather-beaten phiz of her's is capable of expreſſing, recounting the marvellous tranſaction—"Never thought of her ſitting"—"ſo early too"—God bleſs her, if I did not really imagine ſhe had ſtumbled upon one of her old love letters;—tho' to do her juſtice, I believe all ſhe ever received are

ſafe

ſafe in her roſe-wood cabinet.—I remember one day that I had made ſome excellent hit in her ſcriptural ſtyle, and could perceive I was in high favour with the venerable ſpinſter—"Nephew, ſays ſhe, extending her ſpectacles in one hand, while ſhe laid down her work in the other—Nephew, I am am going to fetch—the rent roll of an eſtate, thought I, to be ſure; as ſhe opened the door—but no—ſhe returned, holding out an epiſtle to me, "Here, ſaid ſhe with an air of exultation, here is a letter from the late celebrated lord L———, received at a time of life, when nothing but the moſt determined reſolution never to marry, could have prevented my falling a prey to ſome one of my numerous admirers."—I was too much mortified to ſmile, as I ſhould at any other time have done, and peruſed the contents with the utmuſt ſerioufneſs: It was really clever, indeed,

indeed, madam, ſaid I, as I finiſhed it; I could have ſworn ſuch a letter as that, had been ſufficient to have ſent half your ſex to the devil."—"Nephew, returned ſhe, (too much pleaſed with the compliment to herſelf, to reſent the ſarcaſm on her ſex) I hope you will not deny there is *one* woman, who could not be deceived:—Oh, added ſhe bridling, if you knew all the pains that have been taken you would own"—that my good genius preſided over your inclination, interrupted I—Confeſs now, I continued, that you had a *preſentiment* you was to have a nephew, who would be the moſt elegant fellow in the kingdom—ah, I am perſuaded nothing elſe could have induced you to continue that goodly ſtate you have choſen. She ſmiled at my impudence; but really I am afraid it is more than you will compliment me with. What ſhall I tell you then?—that ſome of our neighbours ſpent yeſterday

yeſterday with us—a Mr. Darcy of large fortune—an only daughter—who, as I paſs here for a very ſober fellow, he would be glad to marry to my worſhip—his eſtate lies ſo ſnug to my aunt's; then I believe the girl, (Charlotte I think he calls her) would have no ſort of objection to the connection—monſtrous fond of me—but vain, fooliſh, and affected—I think they ſay ſhe is pretty; may be ſo.—She has no merit in my eyes however, but what ariſes from the choice of her companion; a young woman of a good, but unfortunate family, very deſervedly a favourite with the damſels here.

Yes, Emma has indeed diſcovered ſome leading *traits*; and her's is a character the ſex ſhould be proud to imitate.—The beauties of her mind are far beyond the reach of my pen to deſcribe. With a heart tenderly awake to every emotion of ſenſibility,

ſhe

ſhe poſſeſſes a fortitude a Stoic might be proud to boaſt.—Generous without oſtentation, her pleaſure in giving is leſſened only by the regret her ability will extend no further:—benevolent from conſtitution as well as principle, ſhe would ſoften the foibles of others into virtues—and ſeems ſenſible to inſure only that ſhe may riſe ſtill more ſuperior, in the forgiveneſs of it.—With a chearfulneſs of diſpoſition, which renders her witty with the gay, ſerene with the ſerious, ſatire never could extort her ſmile, and there needs but that the apoſtle's prediction ſhould be fulfilled in this world, inſtead of the next, *With what meaſure you mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again*;" for Emma to be perfectly adored. Modeſt without prudery — polite without affectation, — ſhe has found the art to unite the utmoſt elegance of modern education, with every domeſ-

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tic virtue for which our grandmothers would celebrate the antedeluvian fair. In a compoſure of ſoul, which can ariſe only from conſcious goodneſs, ſhe finds conſolation under the keeneſt ſtrokes of adverſity,—and welcomes affliction as the humble friend of virtue: on the contrary, ſenſible to the ſlighteſt approach of good fortune, you ſee pleaſure dancing in her eye:—ſincerity and ſweetneſs are her conſtant attendants, and add a grace equally to the altar or the drawing-room.

Such then is the character I love, ſuch is the companion, the friend, the miſtreſs I would chuſe. How often have I laughed in my ſleeve, when I have called a woman an angel, whoſe face to be ſure might be pretty, (ſo may a devil's, for, begging the gentlemen of the pencil's pardon, who that has the power attributed to thoſe ſpirits, would not employ it to render their appearance pleaſing); when her

ſenti-

ſentiments were diabolical enough to ſuit the character in its fallen ſtate. It is ſuch a diſpoſition as Miſs Seaton's that partakes of the divinity, — the tranſition of her mind from this ſtate to the other, would indeed be eaſy.— Hey day! the devil take it, if theſe muſty walls, and worm-eaten folios, have not abſolutely metamorphoſed the gay, the agreeable Auguſtus Sydney, into as dull a fellow, as the verieſt preacher of them all. — This ſtate—and the other! ha! ha! ha! you cannot be more aſtoniſhed than I am myſelf; though, to ſay the truth, I have for ſome time been afraid, if this dainty damſel ſhould continue much longer upon theſe earthly premiſes, ſhe would ruin me for a fine gentleman. —What can I do?—I yawn eternally —then hum a ſcrap of Italian, ſwear a few oaths in ſome other language, leſt the antiques here ſhould take the alarm.—In ſhort, Danvers, this exiſtence

ence is worſe than death—is this to live? no—for am I not dead to every joyous ſenſation—the feathered, and the four-footed inhabitants of this mouldering manſion are on a par with me—they eat, and drink, and ſleep; and Sydney does no more. What is become of thoſe jovial hours you and I have rattled away together: Oxford, the dear metropolis, and a thouſand other places, recollect our names as the gayeſt of our ſex.—And here, by Jove, when my aunt *does* leave me her eſtate, ſhe may as well order me her bonnet, her petticoats, and her ſpectacles to exhibit in, and I'll engage no one finds the difference.—The idea is excellent; a month ago, the gallant, gay Lothario—a month hence, "*Which God of his infinite mercy grant,*" a venerable piece of ſtarched virginity.

I leave, however, my neighbours in the lurch; the young ladies propoſed making a party to drink tea at the

the ſummer-houſe in the wood; the chits knew I muſt attend them, for it was not ſafe to go uneſcorted; and the elder part of the company would fear taking cold, as it would be late before their return. My whiſky was brought to the door — Miſs Darcy jumped into it; —not ſo neither, thought I, a *tête-a-tête* with you muſt be the devil.—" Miſs Finchley the fatigue will be too much for you, will you undertake to drive Miſs Darcy?— Miſs Seaton, my ſiſter, and I will walk."— She mounted accordingly, and the rage in Charlotte's countenance gave me no ſmall ſatisfaction. —They had not gone more than half a mile, when Finchley, who by the way was as much diverted as myſelf, declared her companion ſnatched the reins out of her hand, pretended apprehenſion of her driving too near a tree, and inſtantly overturned the chair. Fictitious fainting fits ſucceeded

ceeded on Miſs Darcy's part, unaffected laughter on Miſs Finchley's. Such attitudes—ſo much languid tenderneſs.—Oh, *you* would have been demoliſhed—for my part, I did carry her in my arms back to the houſe, becauſe I was obliged to it; but I was all the while continuing a converſation, I was perſuaded ſhe could hear, with the other girls, whom I forced into it, for they were all of them too good-natured to enjoy a folly ſo evident. Miſs ſoon recovered however, —could not think of breaking up the party.—My aunt's coach therefore was ordered; and we proceeded in mighty good humour, with the addition of papa Darcy, to take care of his daughter.

The ladies ſung, Charlotte did not execute amiſs, and requeſted my performance. "Oh, ſaid I, you have hit upon what I ſhall comply with the beſt in the world—do you chuſe the firſt part of the laſt cotillion, or (yawn-

(yawning) any of the turns in the new opera."—

"Pſhaw, ſaid ſhe, tapping my ſhoulder, have you found any tune yet, to ſuit thoſe words, which I am perſuaded, are perpetually in your idea. "Horace ſtill charms with graceful negligence."—"Yes, madam, returned I, bowing, the tune of all my actions."—Quelle bagatelle! but I have introduced you to my companions; you have no right therefore to expect any thing better at preſent from

Your

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY.

LET-

LETTER X.

Sir HARRY EDGERTON to EDWARD WILLIS, Esq.

YOUR laſt letter gave me infinite concern—"the weakneſs of your temper Sir Harry, lays you open to perpetual impoſition; your fortune cannot anſwer theſe frequent demands; the extravagant, the profligate, and the luxurious, are by you enabled to continue in their crimes, and triumphing in iniquity, laugh at the miſtaken benevolence that ſupports them."—Tell me, Mr. Willis, who ſhall fix the boundaries of virtue? and what power beneath Omniſcience, reſtrain the tendered charity? your Edgerton had rather be the dupe of a thouſand artifices, than through the fear of being impoſed on, fail to reſcue miſery from diſtreſs: the honeſt glow of heart-felt gratitude, the artleſs fondneſs of liſping

ing infancy, and one bleſſing from the lips of faltering age, amply atone the folly you accuſe. Heaven hath fixed me in unlimited abundance, and while I can reſtore my eſtate unincumbered to the next poſſeſſor, the yearly income I will diſpoſe of. Let us then wave the ſubject; and believe, my Willis, there is an impertinence even in friendſhip, when it would too rigidly controul the harmleſs bias of the mind. I ſhall ſee you in a few days, (as, notwithſtanding my young friend is ſolicitous that I ſhould continue with him, my deſtined journey cannot be deferred;) and I ſhould deem myſelf inexcuſable, could any inducement prevail on me to leave England without embracing you.—Sydney has not found Acton Hall the deſart he expected; his agreeable ſiſter, and in his idea a ſtill fairer inhabitant, enliven the joyous hours. There never was a man ſo entirely maſter of "all that

can ſoftly win, or gayly charm, the heart of woman;" and I tremble for the amiable Seaton, againſt whom theſe inſinuating graces are exerted. On my firſt arrival, ſhe treated him with an unreſerved familiarity, that ſpoke the pleaſed companion, the ſprightly friend, unactuated by any ſofter paſſion: but, I know not how, our little parties have inſenſibly degenerated from that enlivening freedom. —She bluſhes at his unexpected appearance, and fearful that I ſhould have obſerved the artleſs teſtimony of her affection, her cheeks are again ſuffuſed with crimſon.—For Sydney, I wiſh to ſee him ſincerely, honourably in love; a conſtant, generous attachment to a deſerving object, by giving ſtability to his deſires, and correcting that exceſſive gaiety, too apt to ſink itſelf in levity, would render him the moſt perfect of his ſex. By the beſt of tutors the precepts of morality

rality were early imprinted on his glowing breaſt; nor has the thoughtleſſneſs of youth, the ſeducements of diſorderly aſſociates, or the ridicule of wit, been able totally to eradicate the virtuous impreſſions. Born with ſtrong ſenſibility——gay by complexion, frank, ſociable, and unguarded, he is ſeldom able to reſiſt the ſolicitations of his unbridled paſſions; and the blandiſhments of beauty have drawn him into exceſſes his reaſon diſapproves. The object of univerſal approbation, and drunk with unlimited applauſe, he conſiders himſelf as a happy diſtinguiſhed being, exempt from the afflictions incident to mankind; and, unaccuſtomed to diſappointment, dreams not the hour approaches, when he will find even the moſt fortunate are not above the reach of ſorrow. Miſs Seaton's charms are uncommonly attractive, and the becoming frankneſs that invites familiarity, is nobly tem-

pered with a modeſt dignity that checks the daring lover: entirely dependent on lady Amelia, and of an obſcure family, is it likely ſhe will permit her favourite nephew to demean himſelf by ſo unequal an alliance? Sydney too, laughs at Hymen, and turns his pointed ridicule on marriage.

From ſuch a proſpect, what but miſery avails the fair unfortunate? ſweet ſufferer! my heart bleeds for thee.—Tell me, Willis, how can I aſſiſt her? ſhall I inform her Auguſtus cannot marry, and loves but to delude.—Ah tell me, ſhall I wound her delicacy, to inſure her heart?—I have employed all the rhetoric I poſſeſs, in endeavouring to perſuade my friend to accompany me to Bourdeaux; but he is deaf to entreaties, and, pointing to Miſs Seaton, "Anſwer me, Edgerton, is it in man to quit that blooming charmer?"—When I attempt

tempt to look grave, and accuſe his want of friendſhip, he diſpels the gathering frown by ſome unexpected pleaſantry. Ah, Mr. Willis, let no man dare to repine at ſorrow, or accuſe the afflicting diſpenſations of Providence; ſince none but the all-wiſe Beſtower can tell what will prove a bleſſing or calamity to him, on whom it is beſtowed. Misfortunes only confer ſelf-knowledge; and diſappointments perfect virtue. Mr. Sydney has a ſoul naturally elevated, but, conſtantly crowned with proſperity, has never found occaſion to exert the latent heroiſm. In friendſhip he is warm, diſintereſted, and ſincere: diſtreſs obtains a ready alleviation from his bounty; and modeſt merit feels not the obligation he confers. The women he conſiders formed, "faireſt of creation," for his paſtime; he boaſts his addreſs in deceiving them, and ſhews his wit in ridiculing their con-

fidence. Oaths, vows, promiſes, and proteſtations, are, in his idea, the lover's play-things; mere bubbles to cheat the thoughtleſs fair one.

Who is it ſays, young men that are not a little unruly give ſmall hopes of ever being eminent? I like not the ſentiment—methinks it licenſes irregularity; unleſs indeed,

"When reaſon, like the ſkilful charioteer,
Can break the fiery paſſions to the bit."

Miſs Sydney doats on her Auguſtus, and repoſes in his boſom the moſt unlimited confidence: an affection he repays with intereſt, and in his treatment of her, mingles the moſt attentive politeneſs, with the honeſt friendſhip of a brother. In this amiable ſociety can my heart be unintereſted? can it do otherwiſe than recal the halcyon days of happineſs it once could boaſt? Ah, Willis! this ſubject borders on diſtraction: I quit the friendly circle;

circle; but, alas! whither ſhall I fly! will change of place exclude purſuing ſorrow, or variety baniſh thought. But is there not, my friend, a ſtill more powerful motive? Dear, flattering expectation; yes, I will liſten to thy ſoothing promiſe, for in diſtruſting Omnipotence we prove ourſelves unworthy of its bounty.

Farewell, Willis, believe me with the ſincereſt friendſhip,

Ever yours,

HENRY EDGERTON.

LETTER XI.

Miſs SEATON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

SIR Harry Edgerton left us this morning; and, to atone his abſence, the frickle deity has bleſſed us with the moſt diverting original in nature;

pardon, dear Sir Theodoſius the ill-placed epithet: in good truth folly is contagious; thou art not the firſt ſhallow coxcomb faſhion has made ridiculous; and imitation has ſeduced many beſides thyſelf into inſignificance, by inſtructing them to ape the frailties of their ſuperiors. Pythagoras, I am told, enjoined his followers a probationary ſilence of five years; but I'll lay my life, were Sir Theodoſius Airy a public reformer, love, honour, ſilence, and obedience would be the marriage vow; and the tongue of the woman he loves, a much more acceptable preſent than her hand. This man ſeems to wage war with ſilence, his weapon is for ever active, and the frightened enemy flies his approach, while every place he enters re-echoes to his conqueſt.

"Never was daſhed out, at one lucky hit,
A fool, ſo juſt a copy of a wit."

The

The wretch, if we may believe him, is already ſuſceptible of *la belle paſſion*; darts, flames, ardors, never dying love, and unintelligible compliments have, ſince the firſt hour of his arrival, directed their irreſiſtible battery againſt the fair Sydney, who, poor girl, appears perfectly convinced that there is not on earth a more painful penance than liſtening to the adulation of the coxcomb we deſpiſe.—Since Sir Harry's departure Mr. Sydney is more frequent with me; we have the moſt enchanting *tête-a-têtes*; and though his tongue has never owned he loves, a thouſand flattering diſtinctions are more eloquent.—I have frequently peruſed your friendly admonitions—Ah, Eliza, a ſecret monitor declares them too well founded: yet, tell me, undiſcerning girl, how has the lovely Sydney erred to merit the blackening accuſation? I ſometimes read your letter, till I conclude him the wretch

you painted; but when I see him next, every injurious calumny flies his approach; that native frankneſs, the manly elegance, the ſprightly wit, and thoſe harmonious accents, were they given but to conceal the abandoned profligate—Fanny's maid knocks at the door; ſhe informs me her miſtreſs begs to ſpeak with me. Adieu—I attend the ſummons.

* * * * * * *

When I entered the apartment, miſs Sydney was ſtanding with her back towards the door, apparently loſt in thought; ſhe turned round, rouzed by my footſteps, and falling on my neck, burſt into a flood of tears: I embraced her; "My Fanny, unfold your ſorrows, believe your grateful Emma would willingly part with happineſs to relieve them."—

"Ah, miſs Seaton, ſaid the ſweet girl, can you forgive the breach of confi-

confidence? but ſit down, continued ſhe, and I will tell you all."—

I ſeated myſelf, and the dear afflicted ſtill hanging on my neck, I mingled with her's, the ſympathizing tears of friendſhip. We were in this ſituation when Mr. Sydney entered the room; he ſtarted, and the vivacity of unbounded pleaſure changed inſtantaneouſly into an expreſſion of tendereſt concern: "Miſs Seaton! my Fanny! good God, ladies, what mean theſe ſorrows?" then throwing both his arms around us, petitioned us to unfold the cauſe, that he might redreſs or join in our affliction. Already ſoftened, I was inexpreſſibly affected with his appearance, and my head ſunk on his ſuſtaining boſom. Fanny diſengaged herſelf, and left the room with precipitation. I was aſhamed of my weakneſs, and would have followed her, but he prevented me. "Tell me, my Emma, have you a

ſorrow your Sydney muſt not ſhare?" What could I anſwer? in diſcloſing the real motive of my tears, I ſhould have wronged my friend; for once then I had recourſe to artifice, and by aſſuring him we wept for the misfortunes of a much loved young aſſociate, removed ſuſpicion. I have not had a private conference with Fanny ſince, but learnt from lady Amelia the cauſe of her concern: ſhe deſires I will uſe my intereſt with her niece, and endeavour to engage her in a ready acquieſcence to her commands. I ventured to argue with her ladyſhip, but in vain; through what ſhe termed exceſſive weakneſs, ſhe had ſuffered her to refuſe ſeveral very advantageous propoſals; there could be no well founded objection to Sir Theodoſius Airy's perſon, his manners, or his underſtanding, and the ſettlements he offered highly exceeded her expectations. I would have anſwered, but ſhe ſaw my inten-

intentions, and pointing to the door, "Miſs Seaton dare not to diſpute my will: leave me, and tell miſs Sydney Sir Theodoſius is her huſband, or ſhe has no longer an aunt."—I obeyed the firſt part of her inſtruction; but did ſhe ſo little know your Emma, as to imagine ſhe could perſuade the lovely, the ſenſible, the ſentimental Sydney, to connect herſelf with a wretch, of whoſe inferiority every hour would bring her freſh conviction?

This then was the cauſe of my ſweet friend's concern: but was ſhe not too deeply afflicted? a girl of her ſpirit! ſo enterpriſing, ſo careleſs in danger, ſo firm in conſcious rectitude; a girl ſo little moved with the pageantries of fortune, that I have known her, when ſurrounded with every pleaſure, ſigh for the humble ſhed, the charms of peaceful obſcurity, and all the artleſs pleaſures of the rural villager. If lady Amelia's tyranny was

all

all ſhe had to fear, where was the breach of confidence for which ſhe ſued for pardon?

12 o'clock.

I retired as ſoon as poſſible from ſupper to reaſſume my pen: lady Amelia was by my ſide the whole evening; not a look eſcaped her; ſhe was formal and unuſually auſtere: Fanny appeared deeply affected, thoughtful; and ſpoke little:—I felt a conſtraint I could not diſſipate; and Mr. Sydney's eyes were fixed on mine, as if he feared I had not confeſſed the truth, and *they* could read the ſecret I attempted to diſguiſe. Sir Theodoſius alone, was perfectly himſelf, and finding Fanny rejected his civilities with diſdain, turned the varying gallantry to lady Amelia, and by ſome lucky compliments, fixed her opinion of his merit, and ſtrengthened her reſolutions in his favour.—Heigh-ho!

Eliza,

Eliza, thus are our dreams of happiness dispelled—Ah, let me hasten to lose in oblivion the mortifying reflection.—Good night, my friend; may you share in pleasant visions with

Your

EMMA SEATON.

LETTER XII.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Esq. to Sir GEORGE DANVERS.

"In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly pensive Contemplation dwells,
And ever musing Melancholy reigns."

AH, Lord! those trim damsels never dwell any where more to the purpose, than in the residence of thy once gay friend—Now, alas, how changed!—the convivial laugh has long been a stranger to my ears. A thousand, and a thousand times, Danvers,

vers, have I been on the point of quitting my aunt, her habitation, and all my hopes of future fortune; when the idea of my dying father ruſhes on my memory, and I make that ſacrifice to filial tenderneſs, which all the united force of avarice and ambition never could have extorted: "I know not my dear Auguſtus, ſaid he, preſſing my hand, whether to regret the ſmall inheritance my extravagance has left you? myſelf early unaccuſtomed to controul, with all the means to gratify every youthful paſſion—I think I ought to rejoice that the temptations ſo fatal to the father, are not his to bequeath to his ſon—Your aunt, whoſe tenderneſs for you can only be equalled by her deſire of ſupporting the dignity of our family, will ever look upon you as her child; her kind aſſurances of friendſhip, with the conviction I entertain of your merit, are the ſupport of my laſt moments;

ments; do not refuſe to add all in your power to that conſolation, by promiſing me to transfer all your affection from me to her—and oh, my ſon, continued he, if at any time your heart would revolt, at what you may eſteem the misfortune of dependence, check its riſing emotions, and reflect it was the laſt requeſt of a father who loved you tenderly."

Yes, it is that reflection which chains me to this ſolitude — it is that ſcene which preſents itſelf to my memory, and I endeavour to appear content—nay, chearful—would you believe it, Danvers? the chearfulneſs of the gay Sydney is aſſumed—ah, he would bluſh if a real ſprightlineſs were inſpired by the dull objects that ſurround him.—I never ſeem conſcious of my exiſtence but when I am chatting to Sevigny, or writing to you: I do not know though whether it is paying you any great compliment, for

I think

I think they ſay the neighbourhood here is particularly deſirable: it may be ſo, but when the ſpirit—no faith ſhe never had any—but when the immortal part of my good old damſel has once taken its flight, I ſhall readily ſhew my ſentiments of it, by taking mine alſo to another paradiſe.—

I die to return to thoſe ſcenes of joyous revelry, which have ſo often exalted me above the common race of mortals—Hang it! I am too generous to find amuſement in the follies of the people here; and there is nothing elſe to extort a ſmile.—Miſerable ſituation, when narration muſt ſupply the place of ſentiment—a pun the wretched ſubſtitute of wit—and religion all that is propoſed of future joy.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

Miſs SEATON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

THE incloſed pacquet was delivered to me early this morning: my Eliza's feeling heart will join to pity the lovely Fanny.

"Encouraged by a look of affectionate friendſhip, I have ſeen the time when I would have diſcloſed every ſecret of my heart to my dear Miſs Seaton; I would have thrown myſelf at her feet, and have obtained a pardon for the long concealment: but the confeſſion was protracted by my brother's entrance. Say, my Emma, will you ſympathiſe with the unfortunate Fanny? ah, rather will you not accuſe her folly, and arraign as indiſcretion the ſimplicity of youth?

When

When my brother firſt went to Oxford, lady Amelia removed with her family to one of her eſtates a few miles from that place; to be ſtill near him, and to have many opportunities of ſeeing him while he purſued his ſtudies, afforded me infinite delight.—The allurements of novelty, and the enchanting beauties of the moſt rural ſituation, derived freſh charms from the conſideration that he ſhared its pleaſures. Ah, Miſs Seaton, ſuffer me to dwell on the ſcenes of delight, thoſe ſhades have witneſſed; alas! I ſuppoſe you are acquainted with the narrative I am about to diſcloſe.—Why, my Emma, can you not read your Fanny's heart, and ſave her the mortification of recollecting her vaniſhed happineſs?—In the days of his vacation, Auguſtus would frequently accompany me in a rural ramble; and when he was from home, I took pleaſure in retracing the paths we had trod

trod together, while a favourite author was the companion of my walk. It was a moſt delightful morning in April, the ſun darted its enlivening rays; the relenting earth diſcloſed its gay productions; the hyacinth, the primroſe, violet, and gay narciſſus appeared in ſweet profuſion;

"The black bird whiſtled from the thorny brake,
The mellow bullfinch anſwered from the grove."

I had one of Shakeſpeare's tragedies in my hand, which ſo totally engaged my attention, that I had ſtrayed far beyond my uſual walk, ere I diſcovered my error; perhaps even then I might not have recollected it, but that I found myſelf unuſually fatigued, and ſeeing a cottage at a ſmall diſtance, I determined to reſt beneath its friendly ſhed. A pretty boy, about five years old, was ſtanding in the yard, and undertook to ſhew me to his grandmother.

ther. I followed the prattling cherub to the neareſt room, and on his crying out he was their Billy, the door was opened. Heavens! what was my amazement, when I diſcovered an old woman, apparently in the jaws of death, ſupported in the arms of a blooming and well dreſt youth; his eyes humanely fixed upon her languid countenance, while two beauteous infants clung round the knees of their generous benefactor. I remained motionleſs, and hardly believing the reality of what I ſaw, when the charming unknown turned his eyes on me, and ſtill ſuſtaining his feeble charge, "It is thus, ſaid he, aſſiſtance wears an angel's form, and beauty borrows enchanting graces from benevolence."

I replied, that it was the noble error of elevated minds to conclude others actuated by their own generous motives; that an unexpected incident conducted me to the cottage—

and

and I confeſſed myſelf indebted to the chance which had enabled me to relieve diſtreſs, and exhibited humanity in its moſt beauteous form. I took a purſe from my pocket, and laying it upon the table, "Good God! I exclaimed, how thoughtleſs are thy creatures of afflictions their ſituation exempts them from ſuſtaining."

We ſtaid ſome time with the unfortunate family, and had the ſatisfaction to behold our patient ſomewhat recovered by our care. When I aroſe to depart, the amiable youth begged I would permit him to ſhare my walk; I agreed without heſitation, and we parted with infinite regret about a mile from my aunt's. The next morning I aroſe early, and by a kind of irreſiſtible attraction, bent my ſteps towards the cottage: I had not proceeded far, ere I diſcovered the object that, unknown to myſelf, I ſought; he was ſeated beneath a ſpreading tree, and had

had a book in his hand, which on ſeeing me, he threw upon the graſs; and ſtepping forwards, approached me with a well turned compliment. I intreated him to reſume the ſtudy I had interrupted: he ſmiled, and opening the page at one of Hammond's Elegies, in a moſt charming voice repeated,

"With mean diſguiſe let others nature hide,
And mimic virtue with the paint of art:
I ſcorn the cheat of reaſon's fooliſh pride,
And boaſt the graceful weakneſs of my heart."

"The more I think, the more I feel my pain,
And learn the more each heavenly charm to prize,
While fools, too light for paſſion, ſafe remain,
And dull ſenſation keeps the ſtupid wiſe."

To change the ſubject, I begged him to relate ſome anecdotes of the unhappy family I ſurpriſed him ſo generouſly relieving—he obeyed.—

"The

"The old woman you beheld me ſupporting, is the mother of a favourite ſervant I have lately loſt; in his laſt illneſs he intreated to ſpeak with me, and falling at my feet, petitioned me to preſerve an aged parent, and his three helpleſs children, from the ſtings of want: his labour had been long their ſole ſupport.—I aſſured him, they ſhould find in me an unalterable friend; he raiſed his eyes to mine with a look of the warmeſt gratitude; and falling back upon the bed, "my ever honoured maſter, cried the faithful William, I dare believe you;"—and immediately expired. I ſent immediately to the wretched parent, acquainting her with his deceaſe, at the ſame time deſiring her to inform me of every want I could ſupply; and concluding the weight of obligations leſſened by familiarity with the benefactor, I have made it my buſineſs frequently to viſit the little family. When I

uſually approached the cottage, the children ran out to meet me, and hanging round me, diſcloſed their trifling wants, or made me umpire in an infant quarrel: but yeſterday all was ſtill. When I reached the door, the eldeſt boy opened the latch, and pointing to an inner room, burſt into tears. "Tell me, William, why you cry; your brother, your grandfather—are they well?"

He ſhook his head, and conducting me to the bed-ſide, gently undrew the curtain; the good old woman raiſed herſelf in her bed, and ſeeing me, "Ah, ſir, ſaid ſhe, I ſhall ſhortly be beyond the reach of your humanity, but theſe helpleſs children will live to celebrate their benefactor. There are, I am told, charitable inſtitutions for the maintainance of afflicted orphans; your intereſt in the world may place them to advantage; but alas, ſir! will not the charms of grandeur, and the varying joys of gaiety, drive from your

your youthful breaſt the wretched dependants on your bounty?"

I gave her the ſtrongeſt aſſurances that I would ſhield them from oppreſſion, that I would be the guardian of their youth, and provide for them ſuitable to their birth. —

"Enough, ſir, ſhe replied, I am content; and with the firmeſt confidence in the generous promiſe, I reſign them to thy care."

She embraced them ſeparately, ſtrained the lovely girl to her maternal boſom, and raiſing her eyes to heaven, "Almighty God, ſhe cried, ſhelter this lovely bloſſom from a ſeducing world."—She could proceed no further; the weeping child fell from her feeble graſp, and ſhe ſunk inſenſible in my ſuſtaining arms. You, madam, were witneſs to the ſequel of the moving ſcene; and I have the ſatisfaction of informing you, her nurſe aſſures me there are ſtill hopes of her recovery:

but to what lucky chance am I indebted for the pleaſure I enjoy? Pardon, madam, if the queſtion is too daring; but can enquiry ceaſe when it is rouſed by beauty, and curioſity awakened by the moſt perfect workmanſhip of heaven?—I told him the charms of the morning had induced me to continue my walk beyond its uſual length; that finding myſelf fatigued, and diſcovering no other place of reſt, I ventured to enter the friendly cottage; that a lovely boy had conducted me to the apartment where I found him, like ſome ſuſtaining angel, ſoftening the bed of death.

Our topics of diſcourſe were numerous; and on every ſubject he diſcovered a lively wit, corrected by a ſolid judgment, while the frankneſs of his ingenuous youth received freſh graces from the refinements of a liberal educuation. The hour that I was obliged to attend in lady Amelia's dreſſing-

room approached, and we ſeparated with an appointment to meet under the ſame tree in the evening. Ah, miſs Seaton, how happy was your Fanny, when each paſſing minute haſtened the hour of meeting, and every revolving ſun encreaſed the growing friendſhip! I ſoon learned the companion of my walks was the young marquis of Montreal, eldeſt ſon to the duke of ——, that he had been ſome time at the univerſity, was much beloved, and continued at Oxford but till the duke had provided a tutor to accompany him in his travels. As lady Amelia was generally engaged in her apartment, and I had always been uſed to amuſe myſelf in the garden with a book, or my guittar, it was very eaſy to avoid ſuſpicion; and I did not diſcloſe our frequent meetings, as I feared to hazard the inexpreſſible pleaſure I received in his ſociety. I often indulged myſelf in liſtening to my

brother's deſcription of the ſtudent's peculiarities, or to the encomiums he laviſhed on his friends. When the marquis was mentioned, he did juſtice to his worth; but as he was not in the number of his more intimate aſſociates, he was ſeldom the ſubject of his diſcourſe. Conſcious how inconceivably dear I eſteemed the amiable youth, a certain unaccountable diffidence kept me ſilent, and to my own heart only I dared recount his worth. Some weeks were now elapſed, and the dear marquis was become

"My conſtant thought,
Like light, the daily bleſſing of my eyes,
And the dear dream of all my ſweeteſt ſlumbers."

He was the charming viſion of each returning night, and I aroſe but to renew the joys of yeſterday.

One morning, at breakfaſt, lady Amelia propoſed an expedition for a few

few days to Bath: as I had never ſeen that much celebrated city, Auguſtus joyfully embraced the offer. With her ladyſhip, to be reſolved, is immediately to execute: it would have been fruitleſs to have framed excuſes, and I left the Grove without a poſſibility of informing the marquis. We ſhared every pleaſure of this gay metropolis: the men exerted their wit in complimenting my charms, and their addreſs in varying my amuſements: but the marquis was ever preſent to my imagination, and with infinite delight I beheld the morning dawn that was to reſtore me to his ſociety. It was late before we reached the Grove: I threw myſelf upon the bed, and anticipating the joys of meeting, I fell into a profound ſleep; I had left the ſhutters open, and the riſing ſun, darting through the curtain awakened me. I aroſe, and contemplating the beauteous object, "Tell me, thou glorious

orb, cried I, doſt thou, in thy wide extended courſe, behold an object lovely as my Montreal?"—It was too early to leave the houſe, and aiming at a ſtudied negligence of dreſs, I endeavoured to beguile the tedious minutes at my toilet: at length, my watch informed me it was the uſual hour, and I ſallied forth.—Alas! my gaiety forſook me when I reached the tree, and ſaw no traces of my marquis; I ſeated myſelf upon the block of wood where I beheld him the morning after our firſt meeting, and gave a looſe to tears. I was loſt in thought, my handkerchief at my eyes, when I felt my apron gently pulled, and looking up, I ſaw one of the little cottagers at my ſide: he drew a letter from his pocket, and telling me that his grandmother ſent me that, ran from me with amazing ſwiftneſs. It was folded up, and ſealed as a ſmall pacquet, but without addreſs, and I opened it with a trembling

ling hand: ah, miſs Seaton! no time can eraſe the dear contents from my remembrance, and the following lines are ſtrongly engraven on my heart:

"Was it well done, miſs Sydney, to leave the wretched Montreal a prey to the moſt racking inquietude? to quit him without one ſoft adieu! Ah, madam, pardon the ill-founded accuſations of a diſtracted heart; I know the neceſſity which compelled you to partake the fatal journey, and to avoid a final ſeparation, you have ignorantly incurred it. The day after you left the Grove I received the duke's commands, his ſtern injunctions, that, with the tutor he had provided, I muſt leave England on the morrow. Alas! miſs Sydney, malice blackened our delightful meetings, and bore the aggravated miſchief to his ear. I received the mandate with inconceivable anguiſh; but it was a father's writing,

and claimed obedience. Is this a time, madam, to diſcloſe the moſt ardent love? a paſſion, firſt conceived beneath the roof of ſorrow, and avowed in the moment of ſeparation: yet, hear me, all-conſcious heaven, while in thy ſight I ſwear theſe arms ſhall not receive another bride; and may this heart no longer beat, when it ceaſes to forget its firſt poſſeſſor. Adieu, my only love—thou pleaſing partner of my happieſt hours, believe I taſte ſincerer tranſport in vowing to be only thine, than the moſt ſeducing of thy ſex could offer.—Thy image ſhall be the dear inhabitant of my boſom—thy charms a ſure preſervative againſt the ſnares of beauty—and the remembrance of thy matchleſs virtues a ſpur to glorious deeds. Shall I entreat you to preſerve your heart for me? Shall I declare ſo tenderly I love you, the bare idea that another may triumph in your affection, is worſe than

than death — Ah, no! I ſcorn the ſelfiſh thought—Miſs Sydney may be bleſſed—and if you meet a man more worthy, raiſe the deſerving youth to envied happineſs, by the moſt invaluable gift, thy yielded hand. Ere you receive this, one air no longer ſurrounds us both; we can no longer gaze on the ſame flowering ſhrub. Still I envy the unconſcious plant thy lovely glances: and yet, delightful thought! the ſame glorious orb enlivens both: tell me, miſs Sydney, how many of thoſe revolving ſuns ſhall paſs, ere you entirely forget your conſtant

MONTREAL."

A thouſand times I peruſed the tender billet, then falling on my knees, vowed never to receive a huſband but my Montreal. In returning to the houſe, I met my brother with my

lord G——, a nobleman who at Bath made me profeſſions of love, which I conſtrued meer idle gallantry. I endeavoured to avoid them, but Auguſtus caught me by the gown, and obliging me to liſten to a little ſprightly raillery on being ſo early abſent from the houſe, conducted me to the dreſſing-room, where breakfaſt waited. Soon after the table was removed, lord G—— took occaſion to leave us.

I ſaw by Sydney's eyes he had ſomething particular to communicate; nor was ſurpriſed, when he informed me that his lordſhip had ſolicited him to uſe the intereſt he poſſeſſed, in his favour. "My dear girl, continued the friendly adviſer, you can have no objection to lord G——'s perſon or accompliſhments, and his character is univerſally approved. Lady Amelia is capricious; and though in compliment to your brother's peace you have

avoided

avoided that ſubject, yet your ſilence has convinced him how much you feel the weight of her authority. Say, can my Fanny heſitate in accepting a promiſing eſtabliſhment, and in ſharing the bleſſings of independence with the moſt amiable of his ſex?"

Ah, my brother! your Fanny was born the ſport of fortune; nor receives the pleaſure from the flattering propoſal, but that ſhe may prove her conſtancy in rejecting it. Yes, deareſt Montreal, cried I, (riſing with agitation) love can pleaſe but from thy lips, and never will I liſten to thy rival.—I made this tender brother the confidant of every ſecret of my ſoul: he kindly embraced me as I concluded the artleſs narrative, and gently chid me for ſuffering my heart to be engaged, at the ſame time aſſured me he never would controul my inclinations; but as I could not continue long without predenders to my favour, it ſhould

be

be his ſtudy to lighten the perſecution. Lord G—— left us the next morning, and to Sydney am I indebted, that I was not obliged to liſten to the profeſſions of his paſſion. It is now, Emma, nearly three years ſince laſt I ſaw the marquis, nor have I ever heard from him: ah, my friend! was then his paſſion feigned? or does he no longer love? It is true, ſince he left England we have changed our habitation—but my brother has been frequently at the Grove; and I am informed the cottagers yearly receive their accuſtomed ſalary from his bounty:—could he not convey a letter by them? his banker—the duke—or ſome commiſſioned friend, perhaps remits the regular allowance.—Ah! how ready are we to excuſe the man we love. Now, my Emma, you are *indeed* my friend; ſkilled in every weakneſs of your Fanny's heart, you will pity, you will adviſe her. Tell me, miſs Seaton,

ton, how ſhall I avoid the odious profeſſions my aunt commands me to encourage; how prevent a rupture between her ladyſhip and my brother? I know his generous indignation will be rouſed againſt the wretch, ſhould he dare to perſiſt in his addreſſes, and I tremble for the conſequences. Dear Emma, had I never ſeen the marquis, Sir Theodoſius had ſtill been my averſion; though all ambition aſks, were his to offer, I would reject the gift.—Ah, did you know the marquis, you would acknowledge his love an ample recompenſe for all I yield to prove my title to that ineſtimable bleſſing.—Yes, lovely Montreal, your Fanny never can forſake you, ſtill, ſtill my heart acknowledges thy merit; and only when I forget myſelf can I ceaſe to remember thee.

Miſs Seaton in continuation.

Say, my Eliza, why theſe "lawleſs libertines" are ſuffered with impunity to betray our honeſt confidence, and triumph over the ſorrows which ſpring from a too ready truſt in them. Conſtancy and truth are antediluvian virtues, our anceſtors indeed might think very ornamental, but which their more enlightened poſterity have exploded, as trammels too narrow to confine the towering genius of a poliſhed Maccaroni: "but, Emma, what is all this to the marquis?"—Believe, my friend, I hope the ſubject bears no affinity to him; but that in nearly three years abſence, he ſhould not have found an opportunity of aſſuring his "*only* love that her image was ſtill the dear inbabitant of his boſom" is a paradox, and the ſolution exceeds the capacity of your

EMMA.

LETTER XIV.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Esq. to Sir GEORGE DANVERS.

AH, I was perſuaded a fellow of my genius could not exiſt long without *avanture*—if any thing in this dreary corner of the creation could excite my vanity, it muſt be rouzed here: but no—"where none admire, 'tis uſeleſs to excel;" as bad as none however, women and villagers. Take the tale then, that it may not ſink intirely in oblivion. I introduced you to Charlotte Darcy—that ſhe admired me, you who know me—muſt know alſo was a thing of courſe. It ſeems ſome artful fellow, witneſs of her attachment, determined to take advantage of it, and thought fit juſt to put my name at the bottom of ſome very amorous

amorous epiſtles; intreating however a trip to Scotland, as the fatigue of ſettlements were his abomination—then the eclat of a private marriage, and the joyous aſtoniſhment of her father and my aunt, ha! ha! ha! it carried the face of generoſity, nor to wiſh to tye old Darcy down to fortune; and the deluded fair, who has more vanity than prudence, eaſily agreed that the detection of a private meeting would be the utter ruin of the affair—the time, the place was fixed on—that I did not make my appearance was eaſily accounted for—ſet out a few hours before, to order relays of horſes, and prepare the clergyman, the ring, &c.—Fortunately, however, a fellow to whom the hero, elevated by liquor and ſucceſs, had the night before boaſted his plan, out of compaſſion for the Darcys, gave me ſome intimation of it—and as one would not,

you

you know, let a poor girl ſuffer ſo ſeverely by one's attractions, I ſat off in immediate purſuit of them; and, luckily for Miſs Darcy, arrived juſt as they entered the church. Concluding me come to plight my faith to her, ſhe flew into my arms and fainted.—I was really affected by her ſituation, and ſincerely wiſhed the amiable Finchley had the taſk before her of breaking the ſtate of the affair to her Charlotte—Before ſhe recovered, the fellow went down on his knees to me, intreating my forgiveneſs, which I promiſed him, provided he informed Miſs Darcy of his villainy as ſoon as ſhe was ſufficiently recovered to ſupport it.—Finding her returning to life, I retired to another part of the church, while the detected hero made his humble confeſſion. — Figure to yourſelf her emotions when I went up to her, and taking her hand, "Miſs Darcy, ſaid I, though the moſt determined partia-

partiality for a ſingle life, renders your obliging preference of no ſervice to me as a huſband, — I hope you will not refuſe to accept my ſincere friendſhip—think that you have found a brother really intereſted in your welfare, and put yourſelf under the protection of a man who will be happy to reſtore you to your family and connections in ſafety. "Ah, Sir, ſaid ſhe, muſt not you, muſt not the world deſpiſe a girl, whoſe blind fondneſs has hurried her into ſo precipitate, ſo undutiful an action.—I am indeed ſeverely puniſhed; but your generoſity has overwhelmed me with gratitude —and leaves me ſcarce any thing to regret, but that an adequate return will never be in my power.—My prayers and my bleſſing however ſhall be yours; and if their ſincerity can ſecure acceſſion, your merit will indeed meet its reward."—Heigh-ho!—I'm vapoured to death with this humdrum

drum—ſuffice it, I contrived to huſh the affair pretty well, and the Darcys are once more at peace—adore me to be ſure—but that's nothing new—the old man I believe would give me any thing I ſhould aſk for—and the ſpinſters here—proteſt themſelves charmed with me. Sometimes they take occaſion to expatiate on Miſs Darcy's beauty — her accompliſhments, her large fortune—devil take them all—is there any thing on earth to compenſate the loſs of liberty—not a hundred Darcys, no, if ever the blind god does wound me—ſo ſeverely as to make me renounce that deareſt bleſſing of the human mind, it muſt be ſomething more than beauty, accompliſhments, or fortune—it muſt be a *ſoul*—Fortune—I hate the name—let the battered rake who has ſurvived every generous ſentiment and ſenſation—the wrinkled ſpinſter; wed for fortune—let them try if it will purchaſe

that

that mutual elegance of tenderneſs, which can alone ſupport the ſinking heart.

LETTER XV.

Miſs SEATON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

WE met in the breakfaſt room earlier than uſual this morning, and were ſhortly after joined by Mr. Sydney; he was in his riding dreſs, booted and ſpurred, and ſeemed in higher ſpirits than I had ſeen him for ſome days paſt. After drinking a diſh of chocolate he rang the bell, and his man appearing, "James (ſaid he) bring the horſes:" then turning to lady Amelia, informed her he propoſed quitting her for a few days. She bowed aſſent—I read in Fanny's eyes her deſire to learn his route; but ſhe pru-

prudently reſtrained enquiry—was it then for me to betray ſolicitude? yet I ardently wiſhed Sir Theodoſius would atone his former impertinence by obtaining the wiſhed-for ſecret.—But no—the wretch was ſilent, and Sydney roſe to depart without ſatisfying the curioſity he had raiſed. He ſaluted lady Amelia, and embraced his ſiſter.—Alas! what meant my throbbing breaſt, the moment he approached me: happily his own confuſion was little leſs, and prevented his obſerving mine. We followed him to the door; you cannot imagine, my Beauclerk, a finer figure on horſeback, ſo noble, ſo inconceivably graceful.—When almoſt out of ſight he turned round, and looking back, waved his handkerchief. Shall I confeſs all my folly—ſhall I tell you that I wept—this place appeared at that inſtant a deſart, and I envied the very birds that wantoned round him. Fanny and

your

your friend are now inſeparable; ſhe indulges herſelf in talking of the marquis, and every event in which Sydney was concerned has charms for me. Sometimes we amuſe ourſelves with conjectures on his journey; "a thing ſo unuſual, ſays his ſiſter, to leave us for days, nor make me the confidante of his deſigns; to leave me expoſed to this coxcomb's impertinence, and to lady Amelia's increaſing unkindneſs"—ſometimes we conclude he obeys the call of friendſhip. Sir Harry Edgerton, or his Danvers, might dictate the hurrying ſummons—but Fanny ſeems more apprehenſive a "lady's in the caſe;" ſhe informs me here lies her brother's failing; conſtantly ſucceſsful in his attempts upon the fair, he has learnt to conſider women mere objects of amuſement. Thus we cheat the tedious hours till his return, and Sir Theodoſius now imagining himſelf of importance, is, from the conſe-

conſequential airs he aſſumes, exceedingly diverting. Let me tell you, Eliza, if Miſs Sydney continues long obdurate, I have hopes, by a little well-timed flattery, to drive her from his heart; a few tender glances, and a "gad ſo, Miſs Seaton you are too ſmart, too ſmart upon my word madam"—have kindled theſe daring expectations. Lady Airy's compliments —lady Airy's carriage—ah, the enchanting ſounds.—The hero knocks at my door; dear Sir Theodoſius, I fly to admit you —

"Pſhaw, how can you be ſo teizing"—to lay down my pen, merely to be informed the ſun ſhone — intolerable impertinence—why, wretch, I ſee, I feel its rays. What think you, Eliza, he has *prepared* an arbour for my reception, and I muſt toil for half a mile beneath the ſcorching luminary, or forfeit all pretenſions to his favour; I go then, leſt on my refuſal, poor

Miſs Sydney ſhould be obliged to accompany him.

Ha! ha! ha! excellent upon my word, why thou monkey, art thou not contented with making thyſelf ridiculous, but the very ſcheme of nature muſt be altered in compliance with heterogeneous imagination? —Was there ever any thing more laughable! an arbour formed by the branches of thickly interwoven elms, the prettieſt in nature, this creature had been all the morning buſied in adorning with the variegated produce of the garden. Do but imagine a ſun-flower, a carnation, a jonquil, or a lily, ſprouting from an elm—and over the entrance a pair of bleeding hearts, with the initials of his and my friend's name curiouſly wrought in a cypher of roſe buds,—while a thouſand clumſy cupids and fluttering doves, freſh from the toy-ſhop, completed the ridiculous

lous appearance. I burſt into ſo hearty a laugh, that I was ſome time, ere I diſcovered Miſs Sydney ſeated at the head of the arbour, and Sir Theodoſius placing me by her ſide, caſt himſelf upon the graſs at our feet.—Heaven knows how long we ſhould have continued in this very amuſing ſituation, had not a roſe-bud which formed one of the bleeding hearts, luckily fell to the ground.—Sir Theodoſius ſtarted up to replace it, but being unable to reach the ſpot which the unfortunate flower was deſtined to poſſeſs, fetched from a neighbouring tree the ſtool that had aſſiſted him in his notable improvements; then placing it juſt on the bank, roſe with amazing agility, and was congratulating himſelf on his aſtoniſhing taſte; when, ah, unlucky chance! ſtooping rather too forward, the treacherous ſtool flew from under him, and poor Sir Theodoſius rolled into the brook.—Fanny

ſcreamed, laughed, and endeavoured to aſſiſt the degraded knight by turns. —My mirth was exceſſive, and echo rang with the repeated peals of laughter—the gardeners, alarmed by Miſs Sydney's cries, flew towards the place whence they thought they proceeded, and as the cave of Trophonius immediately inclined all who entered it to melancholy, this arbour ſeemed invented to reſtore their native chearfulneſs, and had the quite contrary effect of exciting exuberant mirth — the gardeners, the maids, the coachman, through exceſſive laughter were unable to offer their aſſiſtance; and we all ſurrounded the brook, holding our ſides, and gazing firſt upon the arbour, then on the unfortunate knight, who by his repeated cries, and moving lamentations heightened the ſcene—happily the brook was ſo ſhallow it was more than probable his cloaths would be the only ſufferers; and I queſtion

queſtion whether any had ſtirred to relieve him, but that the ſound of lady Amelia's voice rouſed her ſervants, and ſhe reached us juſt as the dripping hero had landed on the bank. Her ladyſhip appeared amazingly alarmed at the accident, and Sir Theodoſius was conducted in ſtate to the manſion, caſting many enraged glances at the unfortunate damſels, and, I doubt not, vowing vengeance againſt us in his heart. He retired to his apartment ſoon after—lady Amelia ſeems to feel her favourite's diſgrace, while Fanny and myſelf are obliged to aſſume a gravity we are ſtrangers to.—How infinitely would Mr. Sydney have been charmed with this adventure! ah, does he while abſent, think of

EMMA.

LETTER XVI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

MY Eliza we are all undone—that fatal arbour, what miſchief was it big with—lady Amelia was cloſeted this morning for an hour with Sir Theodoſius, and went from thence to Miſs Sydney's apartment, where ſhe gave vent to her rage, and loaded the dear girl with variety of opprobrious language; "did ſhe indulge her in every wiſh ſhe formed, that her authority might be deſpiſed—and ſupport Miſs Seaton—but to ridicule a favourite gueſt."—The poor girl was unable to anſwer her; and ſhe left her with a menace that if ſhe did not prepare on the morrow to receive Sir Theodoſius as her huſband, neither herſelf nor beggared friend ſhould find an aſylum within her walls—now could I laugh very heartily at the impotent

potent rage, but that my Fanny ſuffers; and I cannot perſuade the dear afflicted that Mr. Sydney is her protection from the threatened violence. She ſends to ſpeak with me—I will reſume my pen as ſoon as poſſible,

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Joy, joy, my Eliza—read the incloſed, and join in admiring the nobleſt, the moſt valuable of men.

To Miſs SYDNEY.

"Shew me the way in which I can oblige you, Sydney, and let the pleaſure with I embrace the opportunity evince the ſincerity of my friendſhip." Theſe were my Fanny's words upon a late occaſion, and the time is now arrived, when I will make trial of her affection: on mature deliberation, the only way I can inſure you from lady Amelia's tyranny, is by entreating your acceptance of the incloſed deed,

which, by fixing you in independence renders you miſtreſs of your actions. I hope to embrace you in a few days; my dear ſiſter, do not ſubject your Auguſtus to the mortification of hearing his Fanny confeſs herſelf obliged. I am juſt preparing for a maſked ball; you would laugh to ſee me *en philoſophe*, and point your ſprightly wit at a ſtranger metamorphoſe than any Ovid has celebrated—I know not how you feel; but believe me you are infinitely indebted to me for beſtowing thoſe precious moments, borrowed from the theatre of gaiety, upon that unfaſhionable thing—a ſiſter; and it will be ſome time ere I dare ſhake hands with a *bel eſprit*, or addreſs a well turned compliment to a pretty woman, after having ſubſcribed myſelf

Your truly affectionate

SYDNEY.

In

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In this pacquet was incloſed a deed of ſettlement, entitling miſs Sydney to three hundred pounds per annum, including a dwelling houſe in a pleaſant part of Somerſetſhire.—Thus has this generous brother, out of his ſmall patrimony, rendered a much-loved ſiſter independent; and now, unawed by lady Amelia's threats, ſhe may preſerve her hand for the amiable Montreal: her happineſs could be eſtabliſhed in no other method; to have received an annual allowance from Mr. Sydney would have ſubjected her to many mortifications; and it is impoſſible to confer frequent obligations without reminding us that we are dependent. The dear girl is all amazement, and, loſt in admiration, weeps the unexpected gift. I am impatient to learn how lady Amelia will receive the news, but from her happy par-

tiality in favour of her nephew's actions, I have the moſt flattering expectations. And now, my Eliza, are you not delighted with the noble youth? Dear, generous Sydney! the modeſty that ſcruples to confeſs itſelf charmed with thy worth, differs little from inſenſibility.

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Since I wrote the above, I learn, that after peruſing her brother's pacquet, Miſs Sydney informed her aunt of the contents; and beſeeching her permiſſion to diſcard Sir Theodoſius, aſſured her ſhe ſhould ever find her as fond, as dutiful, as obedient, as while her ſole dependence was on her bounty. Lady Amelia was charmed with this inſtance of her affection, and did juſtice to her nephew's generoſity. Sir Theodoſius leaves us to-morrow; and through the amiable Sydney, felicity is once more reſtored to this little circle.

cle.—Write ſoon, my friend, and by aſſurances you ſhare, complete, our happineſs.

LETTER XVII.

Sir HARRY EDGERTON to AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Eſq.

Madrid.

WHY, Auguſtus, were thoſe unmerited praiſes laviſhed on your Edgerton? believe me they are acceptable, but as they prove your partiality, and convince me you poſſeſs theſe virtues with which you grace your friend. I have been here three weeks, and you would hardly acknowledge your Edgerton in the ſurly Spaniard: it is my cuſtom to adopt the manners of the people I converſe with; their ideas are not perhaps ſo eaſily aſſumed, and in caſes where to diſſent from the ge-

neral opinion can be no imputation on my underſtanding, I neither affect ſingularity nor endeavour to avoid it.

Ere I return to England, I propoſe ſpending a few days at Paris: in that theatre of frolic, whim, and bagatelle, I ſhall give a looſe to the innocent pleaſures that ſurround me, and temper the moroſeneſs of philoſophy with the airy ſprightlineſs of the thoughtleſs Pariſian.

Sir Richard Steele has termed gallantry to women the heroic virtue of private perſons: in France, the ladies reign with unlimited ſway; but we know not where to ſeek the glorious deeds their ſlaves have perfected, nor is the general gallantry productive of general virtue—ſtop, Sydney—I know what you would inſinuate—Unlimited profeſſions are ſeldom the teſt of ſincerity, and the univerſal lover never riſes to that dignity of ſentiment the

fervent attachment to a virtuous individual inſpires.—In England, where we laugh at the fetters impoſed by beauty, and ridicule the paſſion till we feel its ſweeteſt exceſs, the nobleſt actions ſpring from the ambition of meriting the fair; and I will engage one tender glance from a Britiſh youth is attended with more elevated reſolutions than the ſmooth adulation of theſe boundleſs profeſſors.

I had the unexpected happineſs of meeting with our friend Harry Lawſon at Saragoſſa, engaged as uſual in the full purſuit of ſome flying fair one: ſurprize enhanced the joy of our accidental *rencontre*, and in *gaité de cœur* he ſwore he would have the pleaſure of ſpending ſome days with his old aſſociate. Whether he did not find the converſation of one, to whom years had given gravity, as agreeable as he expected; or that his fair Atalanta, appearing in his dream, redoubled his keenneſs

keenneſs for the chace, I am at a loſs to determine; but this excentric genius, while I was folded in the arms of ſleep, ordered his horſes, and ſet off with redoubled ſpirits in his irregular purſuit. How happy is this madman, while, like the famous hero of La Manche, his Quixotiſm enlivens the hours of an otherwiſe inſipid exiſtence, and conduces to the entertainment of the ſurrrounding ſpectators. If you have an inclination for a trip to Paris, I will meet you there what time you ſhall appoint, and accompany you in your return to England. What ſay you Sydney, has this ſcheme no charms for you? Believe your preſence would enliven every ſcene, and be infinitely agreeable to

Your

HENRY EDGERTON.

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LETTER XVIII.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Esq. to Sir GEORGE DANVERS.

HA! ha! ha! bluſh on, my little virago, and believe the pretty rage by adding variety to thy beauty has rendered it more alluring.—Really, Danvers, theſe bewitching females were created but to involve thy Sydney in the moſt confounded ſcrapes; but let me endeavour to give you a clearer account of this important fracas.—Know then, that on my arrival this evening, after ſhaking hands with Fanny and lady Amelia, I enquired for miſs Seaton, and was informed ſhe had been ſome time in the grove; I followed, but not ſeeing her, concluded ſhe had retired into a grotto: nor was I miſtaken in my conjectures —I entered unobſerved, and ſtood

motionleſs, contemplating the moſt beautiful object I had ever beheld, the blooming Seaton in a becoming negligence of dreſs, and reclined in the moſt inviting attitude.—At length ſhe raiſed her eyes, and ſtarting from her ſeat with precipitation—"Good heavens! ſhe exclaimed, do I then once more behold my amiable Sydney?"—and approaching towards me, "this unexpected pleaſure, ſir"—ſhe bluſhed, heſitated, and was incapable of proceeding. I caught her to my boſom, and warmed with wine and beauty—in ſhort, George, ſo little was I maſter of myſelf, that I dared to ſhock my ſiſter's friend with the moſt infamous propoſals—As if ſhe had borrowed ſtrength from diſdain, the lovely heroine burſt from my encircling arms: "Wretch, cried ſhe, were the world at thy diſpoſal, I would ſcorn to ſhare it with thee.—Ah, Mr. Sydney, I bluſh to have been ſo much deceived."

—At

—At that inſtant, George "I felt how awful virtue is,"—nor offered to detain her. Not doubting, however, but that the dear girl, after a little pouting, would be as ready as myſelf for a reconciliation, I waited with impatience the hour of ſupper; but a meſſage, informing lady Amelia that miſs Seaton was indiſpoſed and begged to be excuſed appearing, was all the ſatisfaction it brought:—the ladies were extremely concerned, but, thanks to my ſkill in the diſeaſe, my ſpirits were little impaired by an indiſpoſition I concluded a few hours would remove, and I entertained them with a ridiculous repreſentation of the party I dined in; at laſt we ſeparated, and not inclined to reſt, I ſeized my pen, the moſt eligible method to promote "tired nature's ſweet reſtorer, balmy ſleep."

Curſe

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Curſe on the ill-timed folly that has deſtroyed my happineſs.—She is gone, Danvers; abſolutely eloped:—imagine us ſeated at breakfaſt, open mouthed, gazing on each other in ſtupid amazement, as if planet ſtruck at the unexpected news, while miſs Seaton's favourite attendant delivered a letter to my ſiſter, and informed us that her lady ordered a chaiſe laſt night, and urging indiſpenſibly buſineſs, ſet off in the morning before ſun-riſe.—Several of the ſervants had followed the girl into the room, either to divert themſelves with our ſurprize, or to gain intelligence on the ſtrange occurrence: lady Amelia obſerved them, and turning to Fanny, "My dear, ſaid ſhe, the buſineſs that claimed miſs Seaton's attendance demands immediate diſpatch; and, as the moment we ſay Farewell is the moſt painful part

part of ſeparation, I would not ſuffer her to embrace you."

You would have laughed, George, could you have beheld the altered looks of the ſurrounding ſpectators; lately ſo intent to catch every word, to treaſure every look:—the ſtare of wonder on their vacant countenances inſtantly gave place to diſappointment; and by lady Amelia's lucky preſence of mind, the dear Emma's ſpotleſs name was preſerved from their degrading ſuſpicions. When we were alone, her ladyſhip confeſſed herſelf ignorant of her departure, and gave free latitude to female eloquence, while the utmoſt variety of imaginary cauſes were aſſigned, as the motives of her ſecrecy and flight. I endeavoured to ſilence her, but ſhe proceeded with encreaſing virulence, nor ſcrupled to load the charmer with the moſt ſcandalous aſperſions:—"Good God, my dear madam, cried the afflicted Fanny, reſtrain

reſtrain theſe ill-grounded accuſations; I'll engage Miſs Seaton is innocent, and will return to us with power to account for all her actions."—"Return! cried lady Amelia, almoſt choaked with rage, never ſhall theſe doors receive her; and the perſon who dares aſſiſt her, no longer boaſts my favour."

Diſtracted with a thouſand contending paſſions, I threw myſelf at her feet, beſeeching her to recall the cruel ſentence; while the too rigid beauty preſented herſelf to my imagination, afflicted, unprotected, and vainly calling upon Sydney.—Fanny drew the letter from her pocket, and having again peruſed it, put it in my hand; I withdrew to indulge myſelf in private, and hurrying to a retired part of the garden, preſſed the dear characters to my lips.—Here I expected to ſee the cauſe of her elopement drawn in the moſt odious colours, and doubt-

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ed not but the rage of an exaſperated woman would have ſpent itſelf in complainings to her friend—ſee how I wronged my Emma's elevated mind.

Miſs SEATON to Miſs FANNY SYDNEY.

A fatal neceſſity compels me to quit your hoſpitable manſion.—Ah, Miſs Sydney, believe not appearances; nor think your Emma inſenſible of the generous friendſhip which has long ſupported her. That I am obliged to leave you without diſcloſing the motives that enforce the ſeeming ingratitude adds poignancy to misfortune: my much loved Fanny, why, why am I not permitted to claſp you to my boſom; to make you the confidante of my bleeding heart!—Alas! I thought the ſorrows your ſweet ſociety relieved, the laſt I had to ſuffer; and when I reſigned my father, fooliſhly concluded

cluded the arrows of adverſity exhauſted. My generous friend, I leave you with heart-felt anguiſh.—Ah, how imperfect is the virtue that has not learnt to deny itſelf, and how impotent the affection that is not covetous of the calamity which imparted would wound its friend.—Should ſcandal, rouſed by my ſudden departure, point its envenomed ſhafts againſt my ſpotleſs reputation, I truſt Miſs Sydney will defend it: ſhe too, will ſoften lady Amelia in my favour, and ſhould we ever meet again, I flatter myſelf ſhe will not bluſh to acknowledge her unfortunate, but faithful

EMMA.

Ah, Danvers, over this ſweetly moving billet, even ſtoiciſm muſt drop a tear—that I was the inflictor of her "heart-felt anguiſh," was a reflection I was unable to ſupport.—

Yet

Yet tell me, George, was not the virtue too ſevere that urged her flight? might not even the moſt rigid, have been contented with a leſs painful ſacrifice?

I ordered my horſe—and forbidding my ſervant to follow me, have traced her "over moorlands and mountains"—from town to town.—Oh, I was not born to purſue—never ſhone ſo little—and happily as I am not an adept in the ſport, I have little occaſion to engage in it—you underſtand me, Danvers,

"In love the victors from the vanquiſh'd fly.
They fly that wound."—

To be ſure at preſent things are ſomewhat *derangée*—but I was juſt going to tell you, that all the advantage I have reaped from this notable purſuit, amounts to no more, than the mere ſuſpicion that the pretty novice has ſought privacy in London; at leaſt the land-

landlord at M— informed me, that a young woman exactly reſembling the deſcription, had taken a place in a ſtage coach going to that metropolis. —It is impoſſible for me to leave this now truly deſolated manſion; the women here, might conclude me concerned in Emma's departure, and ſcandal once awakened, exaggerate the truth—I ſhall be doubly impatient till this unfortunate affair is quietly adjuſted; and the moment ſhe is beyond the reach of aſperſion, uſe my utmoſt endeavours to diſcover her retreat. In the mean time, you may be of infinite ſervice to me—be diligent, my dear Danvers, in trying to find the lovely wanderer—ſhe is moſt certainly in London; ah, let me conjure you to frequent every place where it is likely you ſhould receive information: if you prove ſucceſsful, place her in ſome genteel family, tell her how ardently I love, and aſſure her I ſhall eſteem myſelf

myſelf the happieſt of mankind, if ſhe will condeſcend to accept my hand, the only adequate atonement for the injury ſhe has ſuſtained. So! ſo! on my word a generous reparation? who would not be affronted, to be ſo appeaſed. Well, it muſt be confeſſed, there is ſomething extremely ennobling in the ardors of a virtuous paſſion; it refines the heart, poliſhes the ſentiments — can even confer new graces on

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY.

LETTER XVIII.

Sir GEORGE DANVERS to AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Eſq.

"Of all comforts I miſcarried,
When I play'd the fool and married."

THIS matrimony, Sydney, is the devil! an abſolute ignis fatuus to delude the unwary—a viſion in

proſpect pleaſant, but ending in deſpair—an enchanting phantom that promiſes everlaſting joys, and vaniſhes in the embrace.—Socrates evinced his fortitude in ſuſtaining it, and the wits of all ages have proved their genius in ridiculing it. It furniſhes raillery for the gay, enquiry for the curious, and diſappointment for the ſanguine; it inſtructs the philoſopher to moralize, the divine to harangue on the emptineſs of ſublunary pleaſure, and the beauty to neglect her charms. It is now nearly three weeks, ſince I engaged "for better, for worſe;" and you are, doubtleſs, all impatience to learn the irreſiſtible impulſe that enforced the deed. I'll tell you, Sydney: I ſaw her beauteous, and I had proved her virtuous; theſe ill-matched companions were in her breaſt "twins tied by nature." I parlied for a diviſion, but finding little hopes of accommodation, I agreed for the incumbrance,

brance, and purchaſed her with matrimony.

Your letter is juſt come to my hands; I conſidered, and peruſed the characters a thouſand times—the writing, it muſt be confeſſed, greatly reſembled yours; the name, the ſeal, and ſome trifling peculiarities ſpeak my friend; but the diction, the ſentiments, and the pretty employment you have aſſigned me, are highly diverting. And ſo really I am to ſeek out the pretty fugitive—why, prithee Sydney, doſt thou imagine there is ſome point of light which ſhines ſtronger on thy Emma—which diſtinguiſhes her from the beauties of her ſex, and that the charmer is to be diſcovered by the beaming radiance? Pray, my good friend, inform me in your next, where the notable ſearch is to commence, through what diſtrict I am to purſue the flying fair, or whether you would have me receive at once the

noble order of knight-errantry — mount my Roſinante—reſcue diſtreſſed damſels—brave all dangers—oblige wandering heroes to acknowledge your Dulcinea's charms, till her beauty and my valourous atchievements are the objects of univerſal admiration.

Ha! ha! ha! pardon, good Sydney; it was but thy likeneſs in the grotto excited the guilty riſibility—

"Even ſuch a thing,
So mute, ſo dead in look, ſo woe-begone,
Drew Priam's curtain at the dead of night,
And would have told him half his Troy was burnt."

Quoting, as I live! and the inimitable Shakeſpeare, the firſt bard I have contributed to immortalize.—Well, this matrimony is an excellent brightener of the memory—but to the grotto.—In the name of wonder, by what unaccountable raſhneſs were you actuated? Confeſs now, that, notwithſtanding

ing your triumphs, you are in these things a very novice. If at any time you want employment, favour me with the sequel of your romance, and believe me

Sincerely yours,

DANVERS.

LETTER XIX.

Miss SEATON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

AH, Eliza, how are the arrows of adversity sharpened, when pointed by the hand we love: other sorrows may indeed slightly affect us, but the heart is deeply wounded by the unkindness of a friend, in whose bosom it was accustomed to repose.—Reduced even to depend on others for subsistence, my fall I imagined was complete, and that misfortune could

not ſink me lower: alas! the wretched Emma is not beyond the reach of malice; and the cruel Sydney would deprive her, even of the "immediate jewel of her ſoul,"—ſpare me the repetition.—Ah, think your Emma uſed only to the ſoothing vows of friendſhip, ſhocked by the moſt indelicate propoſals; nor wonder that ſhe ſcorned to ſubmit to the painful neceſſity of receiving continual favours, which, though Mr. Sydney could not cancel, he taught her to deſpiſe.—My reſolution was fixed, and I employed the night previous to my departure, in writing to my Fanny—at length the riſing ſun adorned the walks where I had ſpent ſo many tranquil hours, yet I entered the chaiſe without a ſigh—it drove off—and I diſcovered your Emma was not born to play the heroine: Fanny was ever preſent in idea, accuſing my unkindneſs; and as abſence ever gloſſes the failings of the offender,

offender, even Mr. Sydney appeared leſs culpable.—We paſſed a cottage —ſurely ſaid I, on the humble roof inhabited by innocence, peace moſt eaſily deſcends.—I ſtopped the poſtilion, and alighted—"If, Madam, (replied a young woman, in anſwer to my enquiry) you will condeſcend to ſhare my apartment—"Moſt willingly," interrupted I, and followed her in.—

An elderly woman was ſpinning by the fire, to whom, though time had given wiſdom, it had not taught ſuſpicion—ſhe received me with hoſpitality, and obſerving my curioſity raiſed by the elegant neatneſs every where conſpicuous, and the uncommon propriety of her dreſs and language, politely ſeized the firſt opportunity of informing me, that ſhe was the widow of a clergyman, who had left his affairs greatly embarraſſed, and that with an only daughter, her loved Cla-

rinda, ſhe ſought thoſe pleaſures in retirement, the world was no longer capable of affording. There was a hearty benevolence, an honeſt freedom in her manner, when ſhe hinted her deſire to be acquainted with the motives that induced me to ſeek ſhelter in her cottage. I was unable to reſiſt, and thinking her entitled to confidence, I related every occurrence of my life.—The gentle Clarinda dropt a tear in pity to my ſorrows; while Mrs. Lawrence generouſly intreated me to conſider myſelf at home, nor think of quitting them, but for a more pleaſing aſylum. Thus, Eliza, I may again experience the charms of friendſhip, this pleaſing ſociety, joined to your approbation, and a conviction of the integrity of my intentions, ſhall conſtitute the future happineſs of

Your

EMMA.

LETTER XX.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Esq. to Sir GEORGE DANVERS.

OH, without doubt, pride is never better disguised, than when it borrows the semblance of humility—it must be confessed, however, my luck has been singular, but nature gives *that* merit fortune displays.—A suitable introduction this—"to what," you cry—why really, Danvers, to the prettiest epistle imaginable, and which, assuming all the seriousness I possessed, I sat down with a determined resolution to transcribe—but some unlucky idea has put my gravity to flight—strangely discomposed the purposed *etiquette*.—Surely dame nature was actuated by some malicious intention, when she endued me with this power to charm all hearts, and foreseeing

too, that it would not be *my* method to conceal the talent beneath a napkin.—Yet I remember to have found my equal; a ſmart girl, who had more vivacity than underſtanding, more archneſs than ſenſibility. But to the letter—you have ſeen lady Juliet Oſnay, a young woman, in every reſpect perfectly pleaſing: we frequently met in private company—ſhe ſomehow diſcovered, what ſhe termed the virtues of my heart—the mere tribute humanity pays to indigence.—Commendation from the lips of a pretty woman is ſure to pleaſe, and perhaps vanity was the motive, that induced me to treat her with particular attention—her idea, however, ſeldom accompanied me beyond her preſence; and when I left England, ſhe was entirely forgotten.

In this letter ſhe modeſtly diſcloſes her partiality; and in the prettieſt terms, relates the events that have ſucceeded

ceeded ſince ſhe ſaw me: an uncle's death has rendered her miſtreſs of a a large fortune, yet an avaricious parent would ſacrifice her to the duke of ——, a wretch whoſe ſole diſtinction is an ancient title—and who, with immenſe wealth, never purchaſed enjoyment for himſelf, or eaſe for others. Thus ſituated, ſhe has but one reſource—"If Mr. Sydney's flattering diſtinctions reſulted from the approbation of his heart?"—Sweet novice! thy ingenuous ſimplicity renders them ſynonymous.—She has already, Danvers, left her father's manſion, and directs her route towards a ſweet retreat in Berkſhire, where, if this billet is unnoticed, ſhe hopes to ſpend her days in privacy.—Her youth palliates the romantic ſcheme, and her charming confidence evinces the rectitude of that boſom from which ſhe judges others—but I will purſue the lovely fugitive; I will repreſent to her

the pleaſures ſhe relinquiſhes—the admiration of an adoring multitude, and the ſociety of her friends.—I will convince her by this unaccountable flight ſhe riſques her hitherto untainted reputation; and, falling at her feet, conjure her, by all ſhe holds moſt valuable, to liſten to her

SYDNEY.

LETTER XXI.

Miſs SEATON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

COULD you, Eliza, have believed even ſolitude productive of adventure? Yeſterday evening, as Clarinda, her mother, and myſelf were walking arm in arm, deeply engaged in natural philoſophy, we were alarmed by repeated ſcreams in a female voice, which ſeemed to proceed from the road; Clarinda and I ran with all poſ-

ſible

ſible ſwiftneſs to afford the aſſiſtance we were able, while the good Mrs. Lawrence hurried after us. The firſt object that ſaluted our eyes was a poſt-chaiſe hanging on one ſide, with the wheel at ſome diſtance, and a young woman lying upon the bank pale and apparently lifeleſs — the poſtillion, perfectly unconcerned, was employed in repairing his machine,— I took a bottle of ſalts from my pocket, and in a ſhort time ſhe recovered. Never, Eliza, had I beheld a more elegant form,

——" A native grace
Sat fair proportioned on her poliſhed limbs,
Veil'd in a ſimple robe."

The exacteſt ſymetry of features, and the delicate turn of a countenance expreſſive of ſtrong ſenſibility, rendered her extremely intereſting.—She looked round her with aſtoniſhment, and after a pretty apology for the trouble ſhe had

had occaſioned, enquired of the driver whether the chaiſe was ready for her to purſue her journey—I informed her that it was not in his power to repair it, and that ſhe might riſque her life in proceeding. Mrs. Lawrence came up to us juſt time enough to hear the concluſion of his ſpeech, and inſiſted that the fair ſtranger ſhould give us leave to conduct her to the cottage: ſhe complied, with many expreſſions of gratitude, and accompanied us leaning on my arm.—You may, if you pleaſe, attend us, and imagine the lovely unknown, Mrs. Lawrence, Clarinda, and myſelf, partaking a frugal, but elegant repaſt; the converſation refined, ſprightly, ſentimental.—About ten o'clock we ſeparated, and I aroſe early this morning to write to my Eliza, but will now lay down my pen, and join the ſweet girl, who has been ſome time in the garden.

Miſs

Miſs LAWRENCE in continuation.

Oh, madam, ſhe is gone! the dear miſs Seaton—never, never again ſhall we behold our lovely ſufferer.—For ſome time before breakfaſt ſhe was in the alcove with the young lady that arrived here laſt night: I did not think proper to join them, leſt I ſhould interrupt their converſation, and when they appeared I plainly perceived they had been both in tears. Soon after the tea-things were removed, my mother propoſed a walk, and we had juſt agreed to defer it to the evening, when the door opened, and a figure, the moſt elegant imaginable, entered the room, the fair ſtranger claſped her hands, and exclaiming, "it is too much!" ſunk ſenſeleſs in my arms.—The perſon who occaſioned the alarm flew to her, but miſs Seaton caught his attention: perceiving herſelf obſerved,

ſerved, ſhe ſtepped inſtantaneouſly towards him, ſeized his hand, and conducted him to the next apartment. In the mean time the young lady recovered, and enquired with emotion for her Sydney; I begged her to repoſe herſelf, and aſſured her he would ſoon return; but ſhe ſhook her head, as if doubtful whether ſhe might believe me. At length the bell in the next room rang,—the ſervant attended, and I could diſtinctly hear miſs Seaton's voice; about ten minutes after, ſhe entered, her countenance illumined with delight, and beckoning us to follow her, left Mr. Sydney with lady Juliet.—We proceeded to the garden (where we were ſome time after joined by the lovers) and were juſt entering an alcove, when the boy who uſually carries our meſſages came up to us, and ſpoke in a low voice to miſs Seaton—Mr. Sydney threw his arm round lady Juliet, and turning into

into a ſeparate walk, we preſently loſt ſight of them. Your charming friend deſired we would return to the houſe, informed theſe lovers had been long attached, that her ladyſhip had a prior claim to Mr. Sydney's heart, and that ſhe entirely pardoned a conduct towards herſelf leſs culpable than ſhe at firſt imagined it—in the parlour we found the clergyman of the neareſt village—our gueſts ſoon after entered, but miſs Seaton ſeemed the only one in company perfectly at eaſe, and informing him we were ready, prepared herſelf to give away the bride. At length the ceremony was accompliſhed, and Mr. Sydney approached to ſalute his Juliet.—The fortitude which had hitherto ſupported miſs Seaton, at this inſtant forſook her, and but for Mr. Sydney's ſupporting arm ſhe had fallen lifeleſs to the ground—no longer able to contain himſelf, "Look up, my Emma, cried the fran-

tic

tic youth, and bleſs the ſacrifice thou haſt commanded:"—at the ſound of his voice ſhe revived, and her eyes ſtreaming with tears, retired to her own apartment:—the bridegroom ſat the picture of deſpair, his eyes rivetted to the ſpot where laſt he ſaw her, then ſuddenly recollecting himſelf, he aroſe, went up to lady Juliet, and preſſing her hand to his heart, attempted to ſpeak, but variety of contending paſſions prevented utterance.—We left them together; and when I thought miſs Seaton had ſufficiently indulged her grief, I went up to her room—but in vain I ſearched the houſe, the garden, and the alcove, ſhe was no where to be found. I then queſtioned the ſervants, and learnt from them, that ſhe got into a chaiſe, which waited at a ſmall diſtance, and which I concluded to be the ſame that brought Mr. Sydney. My mother was of opinion we ſhould not inform

either him or lady Juliet of her departure, and when they enquired for her, we told them ſhe begged to be excuſed appearing. — Mr. Sydney ſeemed diſſatisfied with the anſwer; but expreſſing his ſenſe of civility, ordered his chaiſe: — my mother replied, that, flattering herſelf he would have honoured her with his company for the day, ſhe had diſcharged it:—he framed a polite excuſe, and entreated ſhe would permit her boy to fetch another, which arriving ſoon after, we embraced the bride, and wiſhing her happineſs, bade her farewell.

Thus, madam, have I endeavoured to give you a clear account of the ſurpriſing changes this day has witneſſed. Your ladyſhip's candour, by allowing for the confuſion of my mind, will make apology unneceſſary. Ah, lady Eliza! how greatly muſt *you* be intereſted for miſs Seaton, when the intimacy,

timacy, only of a few weeks, has rendered her expreſſibly dear to her

CLARINDA LAWRENCE.

LETTER XXII.

Miſs FINCHLEY to Miſs MELVILLE.

"'TIS an ill wind that blows nobody good."—I have been teazing old Darcy to inform me who were the authors of this, ſo juſtly celebrated line—*N'importe*,—peace be with *them*, while we deſcend from conjecture, and ſee the proverb verified. I wrote you an account of the humorous accident, and of poor Charlotte's diſappointment, which, indeed, ſhe felt too ſtrongly, to leave me an unſympathizing ſpectator. Though Mr. Sydney uſed his utmoſt endeavours to ſilence that officious babbler, Fame, the

the affair got wind, and a lady Blue-mantle was found in every houſe, to propagate the ridiculous intelligence. Fortunately a journey to London was propoſed, as the moſt effectual means to ſilence the thouſand buſy tongues—or to avoid liſtening to them;—"'Tis an ill wind," &c.—my heart danced to the propoſal, and with almoſt forgotten agility I ſprung into the carriage that was to convey us

——"From purling brooks,
Old faſhion'd halls, dull aunts, and croaking rooks."

Our journey was delightful; every ſmart equipage delighted my attention;—I watched the mile-ſtones with the moſt ſcrupulous exactneſs, and the landlord of every inn repeatedly anſwered my enquiry how far we were yet diſtant from London. At length, the rattle of coaches, and the glare of flambeaux, announced our arrival, and a ſmart

a ſmart houſe in Bruton-ſtreet was prepared to receive us. Miſs Darcy unfolds with rapture the pleaſures of this gay metropolis, and little doubts but in every aſſembly ſhe ſhall find a Sydney, with a heart more ſenſible of her perfections—Good girl! ſhe takes the world as it goes:—though careleſs in attaining the friendſhip, and unſolicitous to deſerve the delightful applauſe paid by ſuperior merit, ſhe enters every company with anxiety;—the coxcomb gazes on charms, of which none ſeem more conſcious than the poſſeſſor; no compliment to them paſſes unheeded; and while men can flatter, Charlotte Darcy will be happy. This morning, at breakfaſt, was debated the important queſtion, What public place ſhould be firſt honoured with our appearance? Routs, drums, hurricanes, ridottos, auctions, maſquerades, operas, and plays, Charlotte diſcuſſed with unuſual eloquence. We then

then proceeded to adjuſt the ceremonial of viſits; nor was the fate of nations ever debated with profounder gravity.

You know not how greatly you are obliged for my condeſcenſion, friendſhip is a bagatelle fine ladies aſſume at pleaſure, and of which, they as readily diſpoſſeſs themſelves; when diſſipation fatigues, they fly to it as a reſource from *ennui*. In my conſcience, I believe when our modern belles baniſhed ſincerity from the heart, they fixed profeſſion on the tongue: whether indolence firſt gave riſe to the arrangement, I am at a loſs to determine, though they have ſince found it mightily conducive to the eaſe they value: they had ſo often recourſe to the little repoſitory of proteſtation, that in proceſs of time they ſeldom opened their lips, but everlaſting friendſhip, conſtant remembrance, and ceaſeleſs ſervice, flew out, unthought of

of by the fair profeſſor.—The coach waits; we go to Taviſtock-ſtreet, and, truly faſhionable, conſume the firſt part of the day in preparation for our evening appearance.

11 o'clock.

"*La bella che adoro*—juſt returned from the opera—and Charlotte retired, ſo pleaſed, ſo delighted, not with the theatre, the muſic, or the dancers, but the moſt enchanting diſtinction; to be gazed upon, admired, applauded by a red coat cockade and ſhoulder-knot, thoſe irreſiſtible inſignias—ah, how charming!—The houſe was crowded when we entered, and we had moſt probably ſtood the remainder of the performance, but that ſome gentlemen ſeeing our diſtreſs, roſe, and politely inſiſted on our accepting their ſeats: at the end of the ſecond act, we found they had all deſerted us, but a very agreeable officer, who ſeemed ſtruck with Miſs Darcy's appear-

ance,

ance, and aſſiduouſly attentive in offering all the little civilities cuſtom authorizes. This was ſufficient to ſtamp him the reigning favourite, the man who admires Charlotte's perſon is ſure to pleaſe; though wanting every amiable quality, wit, worth, and beauty are laviſhly beſtowed, till like Pigmalion, ſhe loves the ſelf-created form—you tell me from this ſcene of gaiety you expect entertaining letters; let us ſee how philoſophically you ſupport the diſappointment, and believe tho' your Belvidera wants wit to embelliſh trifles, ſincerity is the inmate of her boſom, and guides the hand that aſſures you of unalterable affection.

LETTER XXIII.

Miſs SEATON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

WOULD you believe it, Eliza, your Emma is preparing to commence hiſtorian, and celebrate her own adventures: ſurely they would prove an edifying and acceptable preſent to the world, and more clearly demonſtrate the inſtability of fortune, than the laboured treatiſes of unexperienced reaſon. The caſtle—the ſweet retreat, were neither of them my deſtined reſidence—behold me now landed on a quiet ſhore, fixed in the family of an honeſt farmer, and endeavouring to render myſelf uſeful, by engaging in domeſtic concerns: here my Eliza, I hope to ſpend my quiet days, uninterrupted by future change. Alas! is not this the flattering expectation I long

long had formed; and yet, ſince laſt we parted, I have learnt,

"To bear with accident, and every change of various life,
To ſtruggle with adverſity."

I had begun to write to you from the cottage—I had deſcribed a lovely ſtranger, and quitted my pen, to join her in the garden—the converſation fell inſenſibly on love—ſhe ſighed—my heart re-echoed the ſoft complaint, and we gazed upon each other in ſilence. "Ah, madam, ſaid the ſweet Juliet, will you love the woman, whoſe only claim to your affection, is, that ſhe will purchaſe it with unlimited confidence."—Think, Eliza, what I felt when ſhe informed me, Sydney was likewiſe maſter of *her* heart. I liſtened to the repreſentation of his perſon and manners, which ſhe drew in all their inſinuating charms, with an emotion I did not attempt to diſ-

guiſe, and which the miſtaken girl attributed ſolely to friendſhip.

We reached the houſe, and breakfaſt was ſcarcely over, when Mr. Sydney entered the room—I felt ſincerely for the amiable Juliet, and my own trifling ſorrows were loſt in hers.—I went up, and begged him to accompany me to the next apartment—there I repreſented his Juliet's ſituation and her love.—He frequently interrupted me, but I inſiſted on being heard, and painted her charming form, her refined underſtanding, and artleſs ſimplicity of manners, in their moſt alluring colours.—I beſought him to conſider the miſery that (unleſs prevented by himſelf) the artleſs Juliet muſt reap from her attachment; from her unprecedented flight; and that the good opinion of the world once ſlighted, is ſeldom regained.—In ſhort, Eliza, no plea likely to influence his heart, or argument that might convince his underſtanding

derſtanding was omitted; but it were endleſs to repeat the numberleſs objections he urged, and I bluſh to ſay, that your Emma prevented what ſhe would have given her life to have accompliſhed.—I informed Mr. Sydney, that his expectations from me were as ill-founded, as they were preſumptuous: that had I remained ignorant of lady Juliet's prior claim, I would never have received his addreſſes, and that the inſult he had already offered, was the laſt to which my innocent familiarity ſhould ſubject me.—If reconciliation and friendſhip were the objects of his deſire, the alliance I intreated him to accept, alone could purchaſe them. — "Recollect Mr. Sydney, I continued, the merit you reject, nor conſign to regret the beauty whoſe only failing is her love for you; and who, confiding in your honour, has expoſed her own."

Though he had hitherto defended himſelf with infinite addreſs, he appeared ſoftened by the laſt conſideration—I purſued it, and I triumphed: "enough, thou lovely pleader, diſpoſe of the man you only can command."

Ah, Eliza! the painful ſacrifice was at length accompliſhed, and the ſentiment that had enabled me to ſupport the conflict, gave place to a thouſand ſoft ideas, while all the lover took poſſeſſion of my boſom.—Recollecting Mr. Sydney muſt have arrived here in ſome vehicle, I determined it ſhould convey me from a ſcene I found myſelf unable to ſupport: my journey affords nothing new, but the motives by which it was induced, and the hoſpitable reception that completed it. Can I, my Eliza, be ungrateful, or unattached to theſe worthy people. —How greatly do native benevolence, and inborn politeneſs— outſhine that ſtudied, artificial civility, the great are proud

proud of!—here we have hearty friendſhip, unſullied with profeſſion, yet ever ready to aſſiſt—love without artifice—beauty without coquetry—and ſwains without deceit.

The moſt dignified diſtinction here, is virtue; and we meet but to ſhare the pleaſures of ſociety: thus, my friend, I endeavour, by beholding every object that ſurrounds me in the moſt advantageous light it can be placed, to render my abode delightful.—Ah, why am I not ſtill under lady Amelia's protection! in my preſent ſituation, the plaudit of my own heart, can only be ſeconded by the few that have diſcernment to ſearch my motives. Forgive my anxiety, and believe me, the woman who ſcorns to ſecure the ſuffrage of the vulgar, ſeldom merits the approbation of the wiſe.

LETTER XXIV.

Sir GEORGE DANVERS to AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Eſq.

"YESTERDAY were married, Auguſtus Sydney, and lady Juliet Oſnay."—I ſat down, with a determined reſolution to laugh at my creſt-fallen Benedick, but, on ſecond thoughts, the raillery would be as cruel as unſerviceable. — My poor Sydney!—Well, it is infinitely diverting; *mais courage mon ami!* thanks to lady Amelia, you are perfectly ſkilled in old proverbs, and when things are at the worſt, I need not inform you they muſt mend.

You and I, you remember, have frequently puzzled our own heads, and diſtracted our taylors, that we might lead the faſhions: we have aſſumed a thouſand fantaſtic fooleries, that we might

might ſhew how prettily they became us, and have receive infinite diverſion from our aukward copyiſts. No doubt two ſuch ſmart fellows will make even matrimony faſhionable, and the gay, the gallant, ths agreeable, ſmit with the ambition of reſembling us (but without our charming ability to animate every ſtate) crowd to the temple. On my word, Sydney, as a reward for the pains we take to re-eſtabliſh the forgotten deity, our images, curiouſly carved in marble, ſhould adorn the altar.—Ha! ha! ha! I foreſee a moſt invincible objection, the hypocritic fair ones, forgetting the god they came to worſhip, would, with univerſal conſent, petition Prometheus to animate the lovely ſtatues. —And art thou, Auguſtus, in ſober ſadneſs, abſolutely married? Heavens! in what penitential fit did the black-robed miniſter rob thee of repoſe?—to make Juliet the wife of thy boſom,

nor once hint the premeditated reſolution: but you was right; theſe rigid notions of honour, though they might have excited my admiration, my friendſhip ſhould have prevented you from executing.—Really you poſſeſs a happy forgetfulneſs; and if your letter now before me was not a plain conviction, I could hardly believe an Emma Seaton ever had exiſtence. That amidſt the pleaſures of your happy ſituation *he* is ſtill recollected, a letter only, can aſſure

Your

DANVERS.

LET-

LETTER XXV.

Miſs SEATON to Mrs. LAWRENCE.

SHALL I confeſs, my good Mrs. Lawrence has apparent reaſon to accuſe her Emma of ingratitude?—Received and entertained with the warmeſt benevolence, ſhe returned her diſintereſted friendſhip by involving herſelf and amiable daughter in unexpected difficulty, then fled from the ſcene of trouble, and left them to ſuſtain the anxiety ſhe cauſed.—Happily, madam, I had acquainted you with the occurrences of my life, and confeſſed, without reſerve, the attachment I found it impoſſible to conquer: —lady Juliet too, that fatal morning, made me her confidante: — this amiable woman, formerly acquainted with Mr. Sydney, ſtill nouriſhed the tender ſentiments he had inſpired.—I would willingly

willingly have returned the truſt ſhe repoſed within my boſom, could I have done it without encreaſing her affliction, without convincing her this faithleſs lover had forgot his vows, and made us equally the dupes of his profeſſions.—My dear madam, you are acquainted with the various changes of the day, and your heart will beſt ſuggeſt the motives which compelled me to quit your hoſpitable roof.—Lady Juliet's diſcernment muſt have informed her of what I endeavoured to conceal—and Mr. Sydney I wiſhed to avoid—pardon the ſentiment, whether it had its ſource in vanity, or proceeded from far-ſtretched refinement; but I confeſs I felt a conſcious pride in keeping him ignorant of my dwelling.—Am I yet forgiven? or does my ſweet Clarinda hear you exclaim, "The fooliſh girl, how unſatisfactory is this reaſoning?"—Come then, my friend, I will ſhew you my whole

whole ſoul: — know that I could not bear to remain a burthen on my generous benefactreſs, or that your little income ſhould be leſſened by my participation.—Thus, my ever honoured madam, you find we *muſt* have parted, at a time, perhaps, when encreaſing friendſhip had rendered the ſeparation more painful: —at preſent, I ſolely have reaſon to regret the change: where ſhall I ſeek the gentle moralizer, the experienced counſellor; ſhe, who knew ſo well to ſoften ſorrow, to revive the languid expectation, and to exclude deſpair? Tell Clarinda how much I feel her loſs, how ſincerely I regret our pleaſant walks, and believe me,

My dear Mrs. Lawrence,

Your much obliged and grateful

EMMA.

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Esq. to Sir GEORGE DANVERS.

TAKE notice, Danvers, the last time I wrote to you was in compliance with your request: now to atone the absence of other entertainment, I take up my pen merely to trifle away the tedious minutes; but I shall be with you shortly: the country has lost its attractions—the winds rise—the trees are stripped of their verdure, and my ideas are more unenlivening than the desolate prospect that inspires them.

That you may not, however, imagine Augustus Sydney could support a state of frigid inactivity, I must introduce you to a family lately settled in this neighbourhood. Mr. Stepney studied at Cambridge with unwearied diligence,

diligence, and early threw away his books that he might read mankind. Reflection and obſervation perfect ſtudy, and politeneſs adds grace to underſtanding.—In Mr. Stepney, ſolidity and elegance embelliſh each other, the ſcholar and the gentleman are united: in his diſcourſe, learning is free from pedantry, while eaſe, chearfulneſs, and good humour convey inſtruction from his lips.—The clergyman who accompanied him in his travels, to whom he is remarkably attached, has, ever ſince, continued with him:—a Mr. Maynard, as ſingular in his taſte, as in the virtues of his heart.—His language is ſimple, but his ſentiments are ſublime; and while his arguments convince the underſtanding, his example influences the conduct. A profeſſed admirer of antiquity, he dwells with rapture on the ſculpture, the paintings, the manners of the ancients; and, more from

judgment than falſe delicacy, points out and condemns the contraſt. He contemplates with delight the wonders of the creation, and is charmed with nature, even in her moſt unpleaſing forms. We were yeſterday in my phaeton, upon a barren heath, and on the brow of a precipice, ſhivering with cold, the morning lowered, the hanging iſicles rattled to the hollow winds, and my philoſopher admired the contraſt,—praiſed the goodneſs,—the wiſdom, that ordained the ſweet variety. We have alſo in a cottage, a few miles from us, a miſanthropiſt, who avoids the ſociety he wants ability to enjoy. I fancy the world are ready to thank a man in his own way —thoſe who are never pleaſed, will ſeldom pleaſe; and he that he is ſo expert in diſcovering the defects of mankind, will be frequently eſteemed the original from whence he draws ſuch admirable copies.—Heigh-ho! I yawn

inceſ-

inceſſantly, and moſt happily Sevigny comes to diſſipate the melancholy: —oh, you would die, to ſee him, with the utmoſt attention, liſtening to lady Amelia's deſcription of a neſt, or to the detail of her feathered dependents. —But I forgot to inform you, that I intend being in London in about a week; and you know, George, a good houſe is neceſſary: will you be ſo obliging to take the trouble of hiring one—in St. James's-ſtreet—Pall-Mall —or any where;—the ſituation I fix on will doubtleſs become the center of the beau monde.—Is there no old gentlewoman of your acquaintaince, that would engage our domeſtics? The taſk would not be difficult, for lady Juliet is eaſily pleaſed; ſhe is gentleneſs itſelf—and commendation could only detract from the merit of

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY.

LETTER XXVII.

Miſs SEATON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

IF the unexpectedly meeting an amiable friend calls for congratulations, let me demand my dear lady Eliza's: but that ſhe may ſhare the joy ſhe wiſhes me, I poſtpone the claim, till I informed her, that, walking near the farm, according to my uſual cuſtom, I was ſurpriſed by the appearance of men on horſeback; I would have ſought the ſhelter of a neighbouring ſhed, but the perſons, who cauſed the alarm, were ſo near, that I ſhould but have expoſed in endeavouring to ſcreen myſelf. The ſervant rid forward to open a gate they were to paſs through, while his maſter walked his horſe, as if ſomething uncommon in the appearance of a woman

man, in that ſolitary ſituation, demanded his obſervation; his too curious attention became impertinent, and not daring to look up, I bent my ſteps towards the houſe, but the ſtranger threw himſelf from his horſe, "and can it poſſibly be miſs Seaton?" cried he, in a voice with which I was perfectly acquainted.—Sir Harry Edgerton was before me—imagine the kindeſt things friendſhip could dictate, and think them laviſhed on your Emma. In apologizing for too attentively remarking a woman, whoſe elegant form he thought greatly reſembled his miſs Seaton, he politely complimented charms, which he profeſſed it was impoſſible to miſtake; and in concluding his ſpeech, ſlightly hinted his curioſity to learn what change of temper, or of fortune, could have ſo greatly altered my ſituation. Think not I heſitated to remove his doubts, or that the unfortunate attachment was

forgot:

forgot: no, Eliza, I must have despised myself had I attempted, by softening language, to palliate my weakness; or to have secured his esteem by an ungenerous prudence, which had proved me unworthy to possess it. He was charmed with what he encouragingly termed my noble frankness; blamed Mr. Sydney; then recollecting his heroism in receiving lady Juliet as his bride, was lavish of encomiums.—He begged I would inform him, where he might have the pleasure of waiting on me; and when I had pointed out my habitation, mounted his horse, and with a graceful bow, rode from me. At dinner, I asked my honest friends, whether Sir Harry Edgerton had a house, or connections, in this part of the world: you would have been delighted, could you have witnessed their surprize at my ignorance, or heard the hearty praise they gave their generous landlord: I had touch-

ed

ed a topic on which they talked with rapture; and the unpoliſhed, though expreſſive eloquence, proceeding from hearts incapable of deceit, was an incenſe never offered but at the ſhrine of merit. Excuſe my expatiating on this ſubject:—ah, Eliza, how welcome is the appearance of a valued companion, when we have been uſed to look around us, on faces unenlightened with the ſmile of friendſhip. Your letter is juſt brought me—how unjuſtly you accuſe your Emma, and knowing that the reaſon ſtill continues, which firſt induced her to reject your flattering propoſal, why will you reduce her to the painful neceſſity of contending not only with her own inclinations, but with her dearer ſelf—her loved Eliza?

Though my father would not diſcloſe the reaſon that prompted him to refuſe his ſanction to my deſire of viſiting you, it perhaps acquired weight

from ſecrecy; and as I never knew him guided by caprice, I willingly aſquieſced; in what, I confeſs I was not able to unriddle: were I now to come to you, it would ſurely prove that I repined at the authority to which I ſubmitted.—You would have me appear in the gay world, my friend; and kindly conclude, the numerous circle would view your Emma with your flattering partiality. Dear Eliza, I laugh at the miſtake, to which your ignorance of that world you court me to, betrays you. There you have yet to learn, what the goodneſs of your own heart never could ſuggeſt; and a ſlight ſurvey of life will teach you, thoſe who have nothing to offer but gratitude, are denied even an opportunity of exerting *that*. — We are told

"Ambition firſt ſprung from the bleſt abodes,
The glorious fault of angels, and of gods."

How

How then is your Emma degenerated, whoſe heart, engroſſed by friendſhip, knows not to admit it. Still let this dangerous paſſion continue to animate the breaſt of kings and heroes; women and friends aſpire but to the elegant reciprocations of ſocial love. Yes, Eliza, neither the tempting picture you have drawn of pleaſures that await me, nor the proſpects of advantage you have unfolded, have power to lure me from this ſolitude.—I opened your letter, I peruſed it—and I ſighed a ſecond time, and I ſighed ſtill deeper. —Unfeeling girl! are you yet to be informed, the always-wiſe may excite our wonder, but cannot conciliate our affection. Why was Mr. Sydney ſo ſtudiouſly avoided? and from what part of my conduct have you learnt the neceſſity of ſurpreſſing his name? —Let me deliver you, Eliza, from the diſingenuous ſecrecy; — while my paſſion was innocent, reaſon ſtrengthened

ened the fond approbation his merit enforced.—The ſcene in the grotto, previous to my departure, firſt taught me men were born to triumph over the tender, and to delude the ſimple. I reſolved by tearing Mr. Sydney from my heart, never more to ſubject myſelf to a like mortifying affront.—The cure was nearly accompliſhed, when I again found him, and found him worthy of my affection—thus amiable, I yielded him to another, and in accuſtoming myſelf to view him as the huſband of lady Juliet, love has loſt itſelf in friendſhip. Tell me then, where does he ſeek amuſement?—Gay, ſprightly, and agreeable; the park, the opera, and play, divide his joyous hours; or tenderly domeſtic, ſome are, perhaps, dedicated to his Juliet.—That happineſs, frequently baniſhed from the great, may take ſanctuary in his dwelling, ſincerely prays, Your

EMMA SEATON.

LETTER XXVIII.

Col. LESTER to CHARLES ELLIOT, Eſq.

IT is eaſy, Charles, to teach others wiſdom; every man is a Zeno for his friend; and, like my ſpeculative philoſopher, can preach up reaſon, ſtoiciſm, diſcretion.—"To Rome with reaſon"—or, prithee, retain it, the guide of graver mortals.—To ſatisfy you, however, this affair is by no means the *ne plus ultra* of my wiſhes; the troubleſome monitor I have juſt baniſhed will ſometimes intrude, and loudly demand to be ſatisfied. —Hang it! cannot a man play the fool a little, but theſe boſom-ſerpents mark every digreſſion with a ſting.—Heavens! what animation do the features of my Charlotte want?—could vivacity give new lightnings to thoſe eyes, or ſenſibility encreaſe their ſoftneſs.—In the gay tulip, we ſeek not the fragrance of the ſweet-briar—we gaze on the lovely bloſſom, nor repine at the backwardneſs of the fruit. And, however naturaliſts

may tell us, the things that are moſt uſeful are graced with the moſt raviſhing beauty; experience will contradict or ſilence them. Who would heſitate to prefer the ſwan to her aukward and ambling copyiſt; and yet, none will refuſe aſſent to the ſuperior utility of the latter.— All this is mighty concluſive; but I dare ſwear, that a hundred miles from Charlotte, you exclaim with Juba,

" 'Tis not a ſet of features or complexion,
The tincture of a ſkin, that I admire."

It is a ſad thing to have the wrong ſide of an argument; however, Charles, I can rave in heroics as loud as you; and drown your reaſoning, in

" But ſhe is fair—Oh! how divinely fair."

And how much longer muſt this voluntary retirement continue, ere with an old coat, a white beard, and an iron lamp, you deliver maxims of prudence to reform this generation, and guide the next? You muſt confeſs I am the moſt *conſiderate* young man in the world; ſo ſolicitous for the benefit of poſte-

poſterity, that I forbear to preſs your return to the metropolis, leſt the hours, dedicated to their improvement, ſhould be moſt *unphiloſophically* employed; or my Epictetus commence Epicurean. Yet, if you wiſh to quicken your reliſh for groves and ſtreams, come to Bruton-ſtreet; and, as love and ſolitude endear each other, I warrant we will ſend you back a moſt enthuſiaſtic admirer of the rural —and the ſtupid. I know the ſingularity of your ſentiments; we have together traced the portrait, and dwelt on the thouſand virtues, with which your fancy hath embelliſhed the ideal form. Here you will find them drawn to the life—ſoft, modeſt, lively, ſentimental, and diſcreet; Miſs Finchley pleaſes without deſigning it: ſhe wins the heart, ere we are conſcious of the attack—but

"Charlotte is faireſt where thouſands are fair."

It is impoſſible to be otherwiſe than captive to her beauty. And, to do

the girl juſtice, *her* heart is not guarded on all ſides; on a ſhort attack, it promiſes to capitulate: after all, Charles, *une affaire de cœur*, is at beſt but a ſilly buſineſs, yet mighty neceſſary to trifle off that trifle, life. Come, come, Elliot, clap ſpur to your horſe, view your heroine, and admire mine; or — ſuppoſe you give *me* a commiſſion; I'll court Belvidera, marry her as your proxy; and remain, thine and Charlotte's very devoted

LESTER.

LETTER XXIX.

Sir HARRY EDGERTON to Miſs SEATON.

THE inconceivable reluctance with which I laſt night parted from Miſs Seaton, was too evident to eſcape obſervation; could ſhe as eaſily have penetrated the heart which ſighed to unburthen itſelf, ſhe had diſcovered friendſhip, eſteem, and reſpectful ten-

derneſs courting her acceptance. The generality of your ſex, madam, would deſpiſe a ſtyle untinged with flattery, and ridicule the affectionate admirer, whoſe addreſs, an equal ſtranger to deceit and adulation, breathes but the honeſt dictates of ſincerity. Examine your heart, my charming friend, that heart which ſeeks felicity in imparting it; it will plead for me with the ſtrongeſt eloquence; and induce you to receive the man, who finds affluence itſelf unſatisfactory, till your acceptance teaches her to charm.—I have been unfortunate; you delight in ſoftening affliction: I have felt the anguiſh of diſappointment; your example will inſtruct me to riſe ſuperior to it. I have been young, I have loved with the ardor of enthuſiaſm; and the ſigh which heaves my boſom, is a tribute to the moſt amiable of her ſex. Ah, Miſs Seaton, why did my tongue refuſe to obey its maſter, when it ſhould have ſworn you only have power to eraſe the ſorrows he laments

—why falter, when it ſhould have entreated you to accept the hand, the heart, the name of

EDGERTON.

LETTER XXX.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Eſq. to LUCIUS SEVIGNY.

HA! ha! ha! well, take your kingdoms, your empires, ye Cæſars, ye Alexanders—go, and unmoleſted enjoy all the pleaſures they can afford—leave me ſtill the dear delight the ſpirit of *avanture* gives me, and take the *world*. "Oh! woman, lovely woman, nature made you."—Why, faith, nature did make you—and in you formed, all that could touch the heart of Sydney with rapture, joy, and exſtacy. On the day —"the brighteſt ſure that ever roſe." Shenſtone and Richardſon ſwore I ſhould accompany them to the maſquerade, which was to be at the Pantheon laſt night—with an indolent indifference, I or-

I ordered my valet to bring me a white and gold domino to St. James's, and tumbled into Shenſtone's coach with very little alacrity—the coachman, who had rather more ſpirit, did us the favour ſomehow or other I ſuppoſe—God knows how—to overturn a very elegant equipage, juſt as we got into Oxford-road; in which were a gentleman, his wife, and another lady, acquaintance of Shenſtone's, whom we conſequently took with great pleaſure into the carriage, and by the light of the flambeau, the elegance of figure conſpicuous in the younger ſtruck me exceedingly.—Confound the Champagne, thought I, it is for ever drawing my ſenſes into a ſnare, which will one day or other be too powerful for my judgment.—I had drank a good deal that day, and it was uſeleſs to make any more reflections about it.—I ſwore myſelf the protector of the charming Jeſſy, and with all my uſual *gaitée de cœur*, began to make love to her the moment we entered the room.

—"My God, cried ſhe, is it poſſible you can think me ſo weak, as to credit ſuch poſeſſions as theſe, from a man who has never even ſeen my face — ceaſe, I beg of you, to mortify my vanity."—

"Cruel Miſs Scarſdale, and is this the reward for all that diligence with which I have ſo eagerly ſought an introduction to your acquaintance.—You are, indeed, greatly miſtaken, if you are not convinced every lovely feature that envious maſk now veils, (Shenſtone had whiſpered me ſhe was an angel) is deeply engraven on my heart.—Ah, added I, preſſing her hand, when fortune has done ſo much for me, do not unjuſtly fix that cruel ſting, your diſdain cannot fail of bringing it in my faithful breaſt."

Returning from gaining further intelligence of Shenſtone, I found an impertinent fellow hovering round her, and who had plagued her with ſome ſilly queſtion, in half a dozen languages; to which ſhe ſeemed by no means to chuſe making an anſwer. "Who have

you

you got there," ſaid I, obſerving her embarraſſment. "A man, replied ſhe, who has no merit but that of having *learned to expreſs an idea in ſeveral languages, which is not worth hearing in one.*"—

The fellow ſeemed inclined to quarrel with me.—I was ſilly—and ſome very high words paſſed. Miſs Scarſdale terrified, taking off her maſk, ſeized me by the arm; and intreating I would do the ſame—begged me to conduct her to her friend. Oh, Danvers, I could at that moment do nothing.—The amiable ſenſibility expreſſed in the moſt beautiful face I had ever ſeen, joined to the graceful dignity of her figure, left me unmindful that I had repeatedly ſworn, thoſe charms were familiar to me.—"Yes, madam, ſaid I, as I led her down the room; my life were well loſt for ſo much beauty; and my honour would ceaſe to deſerve the name, could it know any other command than yours."—But our evil genius was not ſo eaſily ſhaken

off; unmaſking, he followed us, and diſcovering himſelf to be Barton, was fifty times more boiſterous, more impertinent.—It was uſeleſs for me to attempt to reaſon with him—he had ſwallowed it at his tavern, in Burgundy and claret, —I gave him a card of my reſidence; it would not do, and my diſtreſſed fair one inſiſted on getting into her chair.—"Cruel girl, ſaid I, to have known you only to know that I muſt be miſerable in being baniſhed your company and converſation."

"No: anſwered ſhe, bluſhing, you have no need to fear being baniſhed them, while it is agreeable to you to call in Berkley-ſquare. My mother has a card-party to-morrow; ſhall I tell her ſhe may hope for the favour of ſeeing you of the number?"—With rapture accepted the invitation, and after following her chair home in my own, was ſet down at my houſe; and then, as muſingly ſauntered up ſtairs, for the firſt time the reflection had occurred that

night,

night, recollected I had a wife.—Ah, ſaid I, we take our piety, our liberty, with us to the altar, and ſacrifice the latter to the former there; but our paſſions we bring back with us—and mine can own no miſtreſs but Miſs Scarſdale. Pity me, Danvers; perhaps when I ſee her next, a cruel coldneſs may have taken place of that complacency: the indiſſoluble knot may have reached her ears; and the married Sydney muſt be content with the cold civility of politeneſs, while the lover at the maſquerade had nothing left to wiſh.—I cloſed not my eyes the whole night—their lids ſeemed fearful to exclude an image, lovelier than ever before had ſtruck my wondering ſight: but may I periſh, if one idea has entered my imagination which has not been pure as her ſoul, and ſpotleſs as the ſnowy whiteneſs of her dreſs. Barton came to me with his elder brother this morning, and apologized for his behaviour, with more gentility than I had thought him capable

of—I ſwore I too was intoxicated—but with this difference, that every moment encreaſed my admiration, and added deſpair to madneſs—while his had in a a few hours quitted him, with the pleaſing reflection that nature had put it in his power to make ample compenſation for all the diſadvantages of art. Adieu—I am going to equip myſelf; would I could ſay for conqueſt—but it is for Jeſſy—and

"Cupid cannot wound her,
For ſhe has all his darts."

LETTER XXXI.

Miſs SEATON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

ELIZA, you are obeyed—nay more, your kind intreaties but enabled your friend more chearfully to execute, what her heart, not waiting your ſanction, had determined: I anſwered Sir Harry Edgerton with an explicitneſs many would condemn; but I am ignorant why

why candour ſhould languiſh in ſuſpence, or a man of worth *feel* the power he has imparted.—Though ſenſible that modeſt pride enhances the value of female conceſſions, I would avoid the appearance of an extorted promiſe; nor make the man I married, ſo poor a compliment, as reluctantly to accept his offered hand. Let thoſe of our ſex, who miſtake reſerve for modeſty, endeavour to diſguiſe their feelings, while I—pardon the compariſon—"Reſpect thyſelf" has ever been my favourite tenet: and you muſt remember, how warm an advocate I am for a principle of ſelf-importance, which generally proves a powerful auxiliary to the virtue that gave it birth. The timid man, determined to think of himſelf no higher than he ought to think, admires inſtances of virtue, which, but for puſilanimity, he might rival; and he never conquers, becauſe he trembles to engage.—Leſt you laugh at my vainly arrogating reſpect from the imaginary ſuperiority, let us return to

Sir

Sir Harry.—Ah, Eliza, how often have I combated an impertinent opinion, highly diſgraceful to our ſex, that "a woman never marries her firſt choice;" now, muſt I decline the liſts: alas, is not my example more convincing than my arguments? Where then ſhall we ſeek for delicacy, for conſtancy, if they are not inmates of the female breaſt? Pity me, Eliza; and yet believe Sir Harry is the man I painted; ſweetneſs and vivacity are conſpicuous in his countenance, and humanity is the characteriſtic of his heart; the ſentiments I feel for him, he only can inſpire: more tranquil, yet tender as thoſe I once experienced, they partake the ſoftneſs of love, and the unſhaken firmneſs of friendſhip and eſteem. Indeed I do not need the pity I requeſted; or if you will beſtow it, ah, pity your Emma, that ſhe cannot with confidence look upon her deſtined huſband, and declare her heart has felt for him alone.

Your

Your offers are very kind; but neatneſs and ſimplicity are the firſt of bridal ornaments, and all I hope to boaſt. Nor am I wholly deſtitute of leſs unfaſhionable embelliſhments; a caſket of my mother's, the keys of which my father gave me during his laſt illneſs, and which curioſity has not yet impelled me to open, will, I doubt not, afford more than I wiſh for.—Where is lady Juliet, miſs Sydney, and her brother? Start not, Eliza; that brother is no longer loved. After peruſing Sir Harry's letter, I heſitated—I queſtioned my heart; it anſwered as I wiſhed, and cleared every ſcruple.

"Beyond the fix'd and ſettled rules
Of vice and virtue in the ſchools."

Had I doubted my ability to *love*, honour, and obey, or could I have been but *juſt* to Edgerton, I had ſcorned to become his wife.

I ſee him from my window; he croſſes the neareſt field, and queſtions an honeſt labourer—he gives him money:—

ah,

ah, how amiable he appears, how worthy the affection of your

EMMA.

LETTER XXXII.

Miſs FINCHLEY to Miſs MELVILLE.

I Have laughed immoderately at my dear Lucy's mighty prudential epiſtle. And ſo, you really wiſh me to accept this man, who, with an air as ſolemn as a pariſh funeral, and a brain as vacant as his countenance, ſets up for a wit, and a philoſopher: happily for himſelf, he is too inſignificant for conviction; and enjoys, unenvied, the eminence of imaginary fame: a fame however, you will pardon me if I declare, I have no ambition to participate.—Happy Darcy, what a contraſt is thy ſwain: and he requires no ſhade to raiſe his virtues. Were I to paint manly beauty in its moſt pleaſing form, from colonel Leſter I would take the portrait: but he poſſeſſes an underſtanding that would give

give grace even to deformity; and his manners are more elegant than his perſon. It is near the hour he appointed to be here; yet Mrs. and Miſs Darcy are not returned from their morning viſits: I will take my embroidery, and wait for them in the parlour.

Bleſs the girl, did ſhe find her beau ſo *very* ſuſceptible, as to apprehend *my* eyes ſhould melt the waxen fabric?—In the midſt of a converſation, ſupported on Leſter's ſide with that grace and ſpirit which gives irreſiſtible force to all his ſentiments, Charlotte entered; the frown on her countenance ſpoke her not well ſatisfied with her proxy: ſhe turned to me, and with a ſcornful ſmile, holding out a paper ſhe had in her hand, "Belvidera, ſaid ſhe, go up into my dreſſing-room, there you will find pens and ink, anſwer this note, and remember I am engaged."—He ſwore the note ſhould not deprive them of my company: but I aroſe, and left them tête-a-tête:

tête: — lovers, I am told, find this the happieſt ſituation. — Fortunate Charlotte! — envy's too mean a paſſion to adopt, or—let us ſeek another ſubject. Shall I, Lucy, ſink myſelf beneath the woman I deſpiſe? We were at the Pantheon laſt night; in our train were ſeveral agreeable men, ſome vying for my notice; but colonel Leſter taught me to diſregard them.—He too, I fear, will inſtruct your Belvidera in a more painful ſcience, whoſe rudiments, are ſighs. Still this man—come then; why impoſe a voluntary conſtraint? Some people have eſteemed an aſſertion, that writing to a friend, is but thinking on paper; a good apology for ill-formed, and ill-connected ſentiments: but this, I dare not offer: and I have expoſed ideas to my Lucy, I otherwiſe muſt bluſh my thoughts ſhould dwell on. Correct me, my charming friend: though I am ſtrangely altered, your reproofs will be received with the ſame affection that dictated them, and your precepts chearfully

fully embraced. — Since we have been in town, the Darcys too, are changed; even in their moſt familiar advances, there is a certain pride that ſeems to make a merit of condeſcenſion: —or is it, that diſcontent ſtamps every object with power to encreaſe the diſeaſe. It is of little conſequence; unmerited favours are more painful to ſupport than undeſerved neglect. I write in Charlotte's dreſſing-room, and colonel Leſter is ſtill below. When ſhe came home, he was entertaining me with a deſcription of his friend; a man, who, he declares poſſeſſes ſo great a deference for his opinion, that he loves, merely from his report.—I ſmiled that Elliott had conſigned his heart, a jewel, to receive the form his factor beſt approved:— while Leſter, *en badinage*, threw himſelf at my feet, and with infinite pleaſantry, perſonated his friend: ah, Lucy, why will men *always deceive?*

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LETTER XXXIII.

Sir HARRY EDGETRON to EDWARD WILLIS, Esq.

MY Willis, the consent is granted, and granted with an unreluctant frankness, inexpressibly engaging.—To-morrow miss Seaton becomes my wife; her blooming beauty, the refinement of her sentiments, the purity of her heart—ah, how grateful is mine for the invaluable treasure.—Scarce yet nineteen, my Emma forgets, or overlooks the difference in our age; with generous candour she declares her partiality, while I, heaven is my witness, would part with all my wealth to place her in an eligible situation, could I at the same time indemnify her for accepting it. Where then is the use of gold, and wherefore is it sought with such avidity, since we feel its value but in imparting it, and an ill-judging world prescribe its use? Ah, Willis, why are mankind at enmity? Though separately

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in ſearch of happineſs, we all unite to bar it from each other. Either the lovely Seaton continues the ſport of fortune, or takes ſhelter in my boſom: charming alternative, could I beſtow the happineſs ſhe merits.—I gaze on her with tranſport and regret; I view her as a victim deſtined to be ſacrificed; a blooming charmer, with every beauty to excite, and continue the moſt ardent tenderneſs, given to a man, early callous to every ſentiment but friendſhip. Pleaſures unmixed were not deſigned the portion of inferior beings: we muſt not reject happineſs, only becauſe it may be heightened, nor make reflection productive of diſquiet. The roſe and thorn grow together; and ſure it were folly to neglect the one, and ſeek the ſharpneſs of the other. Perhaps, Willis, I am the firſt of my ſex who has repined that youth and beauty were ſurrendered to his arms: but there are feelings, reaſon forfeits its name in attempting to account for. The writings demanded my attendance

in

in town laſt week, and I was at your lodgings a few hours after you ſet off for H—. Miſs Seaton has not betrayed the ſlighteſt curioſity to learn the ſettlements; flattering confidence! how deſpicable the man, who would heſitate in returning it tenfold into thy boſom. —Yes, Emma, thou art the arbitreſs of my fate, and thy inclinations, my rule of conduct. In compaſſion to you, I would change the ſubject; but my heart ſtill dictates, and Emma is its only theme: poor Willis, the correſpondence continuing, you are mightily to be pitied; for I cannot give you even the hope of an alteration: and you, who have experienced "How much the *wife* is dearer than the *bride*," will not wonder at the future letters of

Your

EDGERTON.

LET-

LETTER XXXIV.

Mr. HERVEY to AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Eſquire.

PARDON, dear Mr. Sydney, the anxiety of a poor old man, ſtill tenderly ſolicitous for your welfare—pardon him, if alarmed by a report that your behaviour in the moſt ſacred of all engagements—the matrimonial tie, is not what the generous principles imbibed by nature, and (may the vanity of an aged tutor hope forgiveneſs, when it leads him to add) cultivated by education, gave the moſt promiſing aſſurance of. Yes, Mr. Sydney, "formed to engage all hearts, and charm all eyes," you forget that vice in you is doubly culpable: it is no longer "a monſter of ſuch hideous mien;" virtue in another would be leſs charming — Recollect then the numbers, who, caught by the lively elegance of your manners, plunge with you into exceſſes, where the guilt indeed is theirs; but the refined,

ed, the ſpecious poliſh is only yours to give. With a genius ſprightly and active, far beyond the common lot, you quit the happy ſcenes of domeſtic joy, which the beauty and tenderneſs of lady Juliet would ever afford you; and plunge into tumult, in ſearch of a felicity, which never can be yours. You feel no longer for lady Juliet, perhaps, the paſſion which once actuated you—and you would love: but reflect, Mr. Sydney, that the hours of youthful chimeras are paſt. For my part, there is nothing appears to me more aſtoniſhing than the general uſe and acceptance of a term, of which one part of the world know nothing but the ſound, and the other are far more indebted to the ideas a warm imagination has ſuggeſted, than any reality; for the ſuppoſed exiſtence of love, is the firſt ſenſation our ſchool girls are told they muſt guard their hearts againſt.—And a boy is uſhered into life, fraught with the expectation of ſhortly meeting with ſome fair

Delia,

Delia, who is to become the miſtreſs of his ſoul. Of the former, after having ran over the moſt celebrated ornaments of a circulating library, we find the greater part dreſſing out a favourite partner at her country-ball, with all the imaginary perfections of a Mandeville, or a Sir Charles Grandiſon.—While he, perhaps, incapable of the ardours ſhe ſuggeſted, or wiſhing ſome more admired nymph the tribute of them, repays only the cold civility of acquaintance.—Tired with cruelty, where her imagination had fondly framed the reverſe; ſome other youth preſents himſelf, and is in his turn forgotten: at length the partner of her life, is brought to her by her parent—ſhe then diſcards her paſt ideas, as the romance of youth; and ſeeks in the arms of friendſhip and eſteem, that happineſs, which till then, ſeemed to her only the attendant on the ſofter paſſion.

If in the vacations of ſchool, the fictions of an Ovid, or the tender ſtrains

of the Sicilian muſe, have ſunk into the heart of our young hero, he ſits and dreams of a lady Frances, or Miſs Jenny, whom his ſiſters aſſure him is the prettieſt girl in the world—he looks at her, and perceives the roſes of her cheek rivalled only by the vermilion of her lips. Her eyes, ſparkling with innocence and gaiety, recall every idea the poets have painted of the Loves and Graces: totally a ſtranger to the refinements of ſentiment himſelf, he feels not the want of it in lady Frances, and imagines he has fixed his heart for ever. Fearful of the raillery of his companions, and too ineloquent to join the ſprightly chit-chat of his ſiſters, he fancies his paſſion more violent, from the neceſſity of confining it within his own breaſt; till the parade of removal to a univerſity rouzes him from his ſtupor —he returns, he ſees lady Frances, but the alluſion is vaniſhed.—Vanity and affectation have ſucceeded the native ſweetneſs of her manners—a round of

modiſh diſſipation has baniſhed the roſes from her cheek.—He then bends his purſuit in ſearch of ſome other object on whom to fix his paſſion; and paſſes his life in an ideal expectation, that he ſhall one day meet with ſome other fair, who ſhall appear to him with the once fancied charms of his lady Frances.—Miſtaken man, he ſcorns a happineſs within his reach, and would graſp a ſhadow which muſt for ever fly before him.—Till the diſeaſes of age, joined with the more ſevere ones of a conſtitution broken by diſſipation, brings conviction of his folly: then, if he weds at all, he weds for fortune—or, perhaps indifferent to the yoke, he defers it till the hand of death arreſts him in an unlooked for moment, and he ſinks to the grave with neglect; or if he is wept, they are the tears of joy, ſhed by dependents—but what fate muſt be reſerved for him, who bleſt with all of good this world can offer—Pardon me, Mr. Sydney, I would only wiſh to convince you,

that you love lady Juliet more than any other woman—that you might be happy,—that I ſtill look on you as my child—that I am

Your ever faithful

HERVEY.

LETTER XXXV.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Eſq. to Mr. HERVEY.

——"Why what a pox;"
"Give her the hair."—He ſpoke, and rapp'd his box.

WHY now are you really, my dear Mr. Hervey, ſtill unconvinced that the eloquence of a Cicero himſelf would be inſufficient to draw me from the error of my ways—error did I ſay! no faith, let me correct the expreſſion; you injure me if you do not ſuppoſe me the beſt huſband in the world.—I'll give you a proof of it — I remember ſome ſuch a muſty lecture as yours, had put a few ſerious thoughts in my head, (God knows

knows how they came to travel a road they are ſo totally unuſed to) when being *tête-a-tête* with my wife, ſitting in an arm chair by the fire, a tooth-pick in my hand, "Pray, my dear, ſaid I, looking archly enough at her, do not you think we are an amazingly happy couple —am I not an excellent huſband! not that it is my cuſtom to be vain of any thing —only I am afraid, there are people in the world, not altogether convinced of it.'

"I am convinced of it, I aſſure you, Mr. Sydney, anſwered ſhe, ſmiling; nor would I have you different from what you are, in the minuteſt trifle:—but, for heaven's ſake, how came you to think on ſuch a ſubject? to ſay truth, I believe it is the firſt time you was ever guilty of it."

"Really, my dear lady Juliet—but you flatter me—I always intended to play Benedick to admiration, and indeed never dreamt I had not ſucceeded till —now actually, you are very happy Ju-

liet, are not you, preſſing her hand. "Ah, ſaid ſhe, throwing her arm round my neck, united to my charming Mr. Sydney, who could be otherwiſe?"

There Hervey, did I not tell you ſo — the ſex doat on me to diſtraction. Ah, one tender accent from a voice like mine, would ruin half a million of them. Hear me then—I have the tendereſt eſteem, nay, a veneration for lady Juliet; but the narrow track of conjugal felicity may ſuit the ſober trudge of a ſoul unelevated by nature, or worn down by art; but mine, brooks not ſuch bondage.—Diſappointed, but oh, how nobly, in the only point it ever fixed on with an ardor dictated by propriety;—life would appear a blank, unactuated by tumult, by noiſe and folly. I muſt be gay—or wretched.—Judge then, if you had not better leave lady Juliet a huſband, with whom her fondneſs, her generoſity lead her not to be diſſatisfied; than one, whoſe moroſeneſs and inſenſibility, would leave her no

no hope of future amendment. Cupid, my dear ſir, having once quitted the temple of Hymen on a frolick, when he would have returned to it, found the avenues ſo crowded with the votaries of Plutus, who ſeemed too regardleſs of him to make way for his admiſſion, that enraged he ſwore an eternal enmity to that union, in which he was now perſuaded avarice had ſo large a part. And taking his flight, left the dominions of love peopled by the ſlaves of riches.

Really a very pretty little allegory: I only told it you, though, becauſe you ſeem to me one of thoſe old faſhioned ſouls, who eſteem love and marriage, the natural conſequences of each other; whereas, and you may take my word for it—but you are a ſenſible fellow, and can never be ſo confoundedly miſtaken. — Adieu! believe me as much obliged to you, as *you* can wiſh me; and as perfectly ſatisfied with my own conduct as—*I* can wiſh myſelf.—

LETTER XXXVI.

Sir HARRY EDGERTON to EDWARD WILLIS, Esq.

IN what terms, Edward, shall I give vent to transport? — Melancholy may complain, and grief account its sorrows, but gratitude is the sole language of happiness; and Emma's uncle finds that too poor to pay the blessing.

On the morning that was to have made Miss Seaton my wife, I reached the cottage earlier than I had appointed, but found her already prepared to receive me. Her habit was the emblem of her conduct, consistent, elegant and unsullied; a flowing robe of the purest white vyed with her complexion, which that day the roses had deserted. Her auburn hair was fastened with the most becoming negligence, and a bunch of flowing geraniums, which I had before presented her,

"Blush'd 'mid the whiteness of her bosom;"

over them, there fell from a narrow vel-

vet

vet collar, a ſmall oval ſet round with brilliants. As I had never ſeen her wear any diamonds, I looked at it with ſome attention, and in a pauſe of converſation, took it in my hand, with that kind of involuntary action a man uſes whoſe thoughts are otherwiſe employed.—A cat had ſtolen into the room during our conference, and was at this moment flying at a cage that confined a favourite bullfinch; Emma obſerved it, and haſtily ſtarting from me to aid the little warbler, the twiſt that hung from her collar broke, and left the trinket in my hand:—at the inſtant ſhe twined from me, I concluding it was ſtill faſtened, let it go, and by the violence of a fall upon a marble hearth, the ſpring opened—think, Willis, what I felt when I beheld the picture of Sophia — lovely, blooming as on the fatal day I viewed her at the altar. I endeavoured to diſguiſe my emotion, and taking Emma by the hand, enquired how long ſhe had been miſtreſs of that bauble? with-

out affecting ſurprize at my unaccountable curioſity, ſhe informed me, that during her father's laſt illneſs, he called her to his bed-ſide, delivered her a key, and pointed at the caſket to which it belonged; at the ſame time gave her injunctions not to open it till after his deceaſe: — "Emma, continued the good old man, the laſt moments of a life that hath been dedicated to thy wellfare, ſhall be employed in thy ſervice:—I have yet, my dear girl, a few more inſtructions to convey, a few more truths to diſcloſe, ere we part for ever.—Ah, wou'd to God I might in death reſtore the precious delegated charge—my Emma, you have yet a father"—

"He would have proceeded, but the words died upon his lips."—Here her tears did juſtice to his memory; then turning to me with inimitable ſweetneſs, "Sir Harry (ſhe continued) your heart will beſt inform you what mine has felt.—Miſs Sydney found me ſunk in

in ſorrow, and her kindneſs helped me to ſupport, though it could not to teach me to forget my loſs.—While I continued at M—, 'twas full employ to range the walks where he had trod, to gaze on proſpects he admired, and water with my tears the ſhrubs he planted. At Acton-hall far different ſcenes ſucceeded;—and tho' I frequently repeated the words that fell from his lips, the caſket ſtill remained unopened:—whether the contents were unvalued, or that I received delight from the conſideration that I had it in my power ſtill to obey him, I will not determine; but this morning, ſir, I firſt unlocked it, and was ſurprized to find all its contents a trinket and a letter — the former you have ſeen, the latter I had not time to open, ere you arrived—"Quick, cried I, interrupting her, the caſket—and the letter—haſte my Emma." She flew from me, and inſtantly returned with them. The paper confirmed my hopes: it was the writing I

gave to Edmonds when I conſigned the infant Emma to his care. Figure to yourſelf my happineſs, in recounting to the liſtening wonderer the ſecret of her birth, and you will agree with me

"The heart can ne'er a tranſport know
That never felt a pain."

LETTER XXXVII.

Colonel LESTER to CHARLES ELLIOTT, Eſq.

THAT you ſober, thinking mortals, who make a thouſand ſurmiſes, inferences, and concluſions, who, through the mere dint of perſeverance, and the having tried all things, hit at laſt upon the right; are either unuſeful or inſignificant beings, can be only one of the many prejudices makind have agreed in adopting. For my part, Charles, (and let me tell you I have duly weighed all reaſons pro and con) I am of opinion that conjurors, gentlemen of the conſidering cap, or, in other words,

words, you theoriſts are moſt uſeful members of ſociety. Give you the ſlighteſt probability and you immediately ſet to work: happy, indeed, when "the white web of flowing thought" proves more durable than the labours of Penelope.

Raillery apart; I give you joy of your amazing penetration; and in return, congratulate me on the affection of my Belvidera—a glorious diſtinction no Dioclefian would reſign.

She received my addreſs with evident pleaſure, a pleaſure, rendered doubly charming by the baſhful modeſty that tried to check it. My new-aſſumed character becomes me mightily—how ſhould it do otherwiſe? We have heard of a Paris, an Alcibiades, a Sedley—in love, Charles, men have but one language; and in the beaten track "we kneel, implore, perſiſt, overcome—and leave;"—do not however imagine the latter my reſolution: they are, indeed, villains who ſport with the affections of

of the fair. You are, ere this, fixed in your rural quiet, courting the Dryads of your father's woods, or wooing Echo to your embraces: — Courage, Charles! Some witty ſatiriſts have declared this nymph inſenſible as rocks, but ſo great is her partiality for young men of your diſpoſition, that ſwear you love, and I warrant ſhe will repeat your words; I ſhall rejoice when the contract is determined, ſince that muſt ſurely prove a happy engagement where ſound and ſenſe are united.

Charlotte Darcy does not ſupport her captive's deſertion with the ſtoiciſm her conduct promiſed; but there are people, loth to reſign poſſeſſions they never valued. The poor girl hates Belvidera moſt cordially; upon my ſoul I am ſorry to be the cauſe of their diſſenſion. — Miſs Finchley's ſituation is peculiarly diſagreeable, and I am malicious enough to take pleaſure in her perplexity, ſince I can turn it to advantage, and from it draw arguments

for

for the ſpeedy celebration of our nuptials.—She bluſhes at the hurrying precipitation—but bluſhes, are the heralds of conſent. The country, Charles, is favourable to the Muſes; try your ſkill at an epithalamium, and though this ſeaſon of the year affords no zephyrs, flowers or fragance; Pan and his ruſtic tribe will join the ſong: even ſhould they prove inſufficient, Olympus is at hand; and its immortal inhabitants will be eloquent in your verſe.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Miſs EMMA EDGERTON to lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

YOUR letter, my dear Eliza, is juſt brought to me; and, I believe you ſincerely rejoiced at my good fortune—for you have wept my griefs.—It ſeems ſtrange, that in ſorrow we fly to the pen for relief, and write with eaſe and elegance; but change the proſpect and we are no longer eloquent.—I cannot

not otherwiſe account for this, but that as misfortunes are more incident to humanity, our minds are beſt adapted to receive melancholy ideas, and our language to expreſs them;

——"So properly the objects of affliction,
That heaven is pleaſed to make diſtreſs become us."

I hate trifling prefaces, the reſult of folly, or of vanity; and as I know my Eliza intereſted in all that concerns her friend, I will endeavour to recount in his own words,

The Hiſtory of Sir HARRY EDGERTON.

"In the narrative I am about to diſcloſe, I only bear a ſecond part: I have a brother Emma, our opinions are the ſame, our ſouls inſeparable, and our hiſtory is connected. In compaſſion to you, I will paſs over the firſt years of our lives, diſtinguiſhed but by variety of juvenile recreations. I was near twenty, and Frederick eleven months

months younger, when our tutor was diſcharged.—We found ourſelves poſſeſſed of unbounded happineſs, and bleſt with an ability to enjoy it. We ſmiled, when lovers talked of changing hearts; and could not hold ourſelves ſo dear, as each eſteemed the other. When ſolicited to partake a favourite amuſement, or join in ſome gay frolic, we have retired, have ſhut out pleaſure—or rather found it in "the flow of ſoul." The warm reciprocal affection enlarged our minds; and Frederick was deſtined early to diſcover, that friendſhip prepares the heart for love. We had planned a trip to Paris, and, by chance mentioned our ſcheme to a young fellow, who deſired us to take the charge of a letter addreſſed to his ſiſter, a penſioner in the convent de —— Soon after our arrival, we recollected, and determined to execute his commiſſion—We were introduced at the grate, where ſhe appeared; and ere we had anſwered a few natural interrogatories,

a lady

a lady that had followed us into the convent enquired for her daughter, who was immediately conducted to her. I thought her formed to win the heart; but Frederick found her ſo. To me ſhe appeared charming — him ſhe charmed. I need not tell you the acquaintance was cultivated, and our viſits frequently repeated—nor relate by what ſteps we learnt ſhe was the daughter of monſieur de —. Who in the ſpace of a few months, had buried one wife, and received a ſecond. The former was an Engliſh woman, and had by articles ſecured to herſelf the privilege of educating her girls in the proteſtant religion. Sophia was her only child, ſhe had imbibed the precepts of chriſtianity from her lips; and the virtues it inculcates were rooted in her boſom. She wept over her mother's grave, and lamented the kind tutoreſs whoſe life elucidated the maxims ſhe had enforced. The poor Sophia received her ſtepmother with ſubmiſſion,

miſſion, and through the natural ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition, anſwered frowns with ſmiles.— She had no other ſhield to ward off harſhneſs, than meekneſs and reſignation, theſe ſhe practiſed; but vulgar minds muſt be awed, not ſoftened into virtue. The mildneſs which at firſt trembles to repel, is often, by frequent inſults, awakened into action. True humility, and that laudable ſoftneſs that is founded on reflection, though not eaſily provoked, yet touched too far, riſes into ſpirit; and theſe apparently oppoſite qualities, are only perfect when combined.—Sophia poſſeſſed them in an eminent degree— She combated rigour with ſubmiſſion, till her religion was invaded; then with a firmneſs undaunted by cruelty or threats, vowed to reſign her principles but with her life. Madame de — aſtoniſhed, adopted more ſoothing methods; but finding her ſtill immoveable, her rage acquired encreaſing ſtrength from the ſhort ſuſpence. This

artful

artful woman had gained the entire aſcendency over her huſband, who ſaw only the objects to which ſhe pointed, and acted as ſhe directed— by alienating his affection from, or otherwiſe diſpoſing of Sophia, ſhe hoped to ſecure his fortune to her daughters by a former marriage; and repreſenting to him that from *her* youth, he might expect a numerous family; ſhe engaged him as warmly as herſelf in a reſolution of marrying the poor unfortunate girl to the brother of her confeſſor—Thoughtleſs of the meditated miſchief, Sophia had retired to her dreſſing-room, where ſhe was ſurpriſed by monſieur and madame de — a friar, and their deſtined ſon—her parents did not allow her time to demand the reaſon of their interrupting her retirement; but jointly inſiſted that ſhe *that* moment abjured her faith, or received her huſband—a dreadful alternative, and each productive of the other.—Her blood congealed with horror, the powers of life were ſuſpend-

ſuſpended, and left *her* incapable to determine; or *them* to purſue their cruelty. They laid her upon a bed, and when her ſenſe returned, ſhe found herſelf attended but by one domeſtic; ſhe ſent her to ſeek a ſmelling bottle where ſhe had not laid one, and ſtealing down the back ſtairs, fled from the threatened violence.—The maid not ſuſpecting her intentions, but fearing that her diſorder might return, haſtened back; and ſoon alarmed the family—Servants were ſent to ſeek her—unfortunately the ſearch proved too ſucceſsful, they overtook the trembling Sophia, and conducted her back to her irritated parents.—This flight was the ſole handle ſhe had given for malice, and madame de — was ſkilled to make the moſt of it. A coach was immediately ordered; they conveyed her to a convent, and related an ill-connected tale, in which they declared the perverſion of her principles was the reſult of a clandeſtine correſpondence with ſome heretic of low birth,

birth, &c. Her flight corroborated theſe circumſtances; the credulous abbeſs readily believed them, and they bribed her to ſeverity.—Sophia was deſtined to take the veil, and ſome months of her noviciate were expired ere we beheld her:—her reaſon long had ſhuddered at the proſpect:—ſhe looked at Frederick and her heart revolted. The promiſes of monſieur de— had engaged the abbeſs on their ſide; my brother's gold was now more powerful, but her indulgence extended no further than conducting Sophia to the grate. Here he had the ſatisfaction to learn he was beloved; and when he intreated her to receive no other than the bonds of Hymen, her tears and bluſhes did juſtice to an affection her tongue had heſitated as eloquently to expreſs. Certain of her heart, Frederick waited on her father, repreſented the cruelty of confining her; but the ſole anſwer he obtained was, an aſſurance that neceſſity compelled it:—he remonſtrated,

and

and after vainly uſing every argument his reaſon could ſuggeſt, confeſſed his paſſion, declared his family and expectations, and intreated her hand: monſieur de — ſtarted off his chair in rapture; then conſidering my brother with attention, *Ah que non*, ſaid he, ſhaking his head, and his features reſumed their uſual auſterity: his doubts were however eaſily removed, and the engagement became reciprocal. *Ces meſſieurs Anglois ſont plus polis du monde*, ſaid the old man, as Frederick left him. The proſpect of aggrandizement ſoftened her avaricious parents, and the next day Sophia left the convent. The lovers now converſed without reſtraint, and lived but for each other. When merit is the baſis of love, avarice may combat the paſſion, but prudence ſtrengthens it. — I knew not with what arguments to oppoſe a connection I approved, and which indeed, from the moment Sophia declared her partiality, had proceeded too far to allow an honourable

nourable retreat. I ſometimes reminded Frederick we had a father; but we were both young, we judged of others by ourſelves, and both conſidered virtue the faireſt patrimony, and reſpected merit as the firſt diſtinction. Little doubting our father's conſent, we agreed to return London and to obtain it. With difficulty I prevailed on Frederick to continue at Paris; for ſhould his conſent not anſwer our demand, I could with greater temper liſten to his objections, and of courſe more readily remove them. When I arrived in town, I urged my brother's ſuit; but reaſon and intreaty were alike ineffectual to prevail.—When I found no probability of ſucceeding, I endeavoured to laugh off the affair; to repreſent it merely a boyiſh gallantry—I feared he ſhould command him to think no more of it;—but Sir William, in whoſe creed faith in females was not inſerted, and in whoſe practice conſtancy had no place, himſelf aided the deception:

—he appeared ſatisfied his ſons ſhould tread in his path, and make the fair ſubſervient to their amuſement; at beſt, the charmers of a leiſure hour. I wrote to Frederick, declaring the unſucceſsful embaſſy, and adviſed him to wait till a more fortunate moment might reconcile his love and duty; but he, joining with the moraliſts who teach us to ſeize the preſent, thought it the beſt time to ſecure his honour and his Sophia. He acquainted me with his intentions, and I reached Paris the morning ſhe had put on her bridal ornaments.—An intimate friend was her only attendant—Louiſa Clairvill was ſeldom the handſomeſt woman in an aſſembly; but in her preſence beauty appeared a trifling diſtinction. She had no pretenſion to wit, but her ſentiments were refined, and her language elegantly adapted to expreſs them. Her mirth was free from levity, and her ſerioufneſs ſtranger to melancholy. She was without vanity; yet having

learnt and practiſed the virtues of her ſex, ſhe knew to make them valued.—A native grace diſtinguiſhed all her actions; and her ſweet diſpoſition, like the enlivening ſunſhine, diffuſed ſerenity and chearfulneſs.

"You have hitherto, my Emma, beheld us happy; or ſenſible of no other ſorrow than the lover's pleaſing pain: but we can exclaim with Rouſſeau: "Mankind are all born tributary to ill fortune; and the happieſt are thoſe who have paid their debts the earlieſt."

Sir Harry aroſe, he left the room; but ſoon returning, reſumed his tale.

"Sophia and Louiſa were companions in infancy; and in riper years, their affection realized whatever poets ſing of friendſhip.—In the former my brother found his happineſs complete: virtue ſtrengthened affection, and Hymen rivetted the bonds of love.—To aſcertain this happineſs, I had perhaps deviated from diſcretion; and the man who in his friend's concern is negligent,

yet

yet prudent for himſelf, is deſervedly branded with contempt. But not to detract from the moſt meritorious action of my life, let us give this apparent prudence an epithet more ſuitable: I determined to make myſelf the ſacrifice of filial obedience, and to reſtore Frederick to Sir William's favour:—this reſolution I adopted at a time when Louiſa's charms inſtructed me in the difficulty of maintaining it. No anguiſh can equal his, who finds himſelf beloved by a woman of merit, yet cannot aſk her hand; an anguiſh doubled, when by ſo doing, he might enoble the object he approves. Louiſa's heart, as refined as her manners, was, like them, unaccuſtomed to conſtraint: and reſpect, friendſhip, or affected coldneſs, were too ſlight to veil *my* ſentiments. Some months continued thus; the principle that firſt pointed out my conduct, taught me to perſiſt;—but Louiſa had no interior obſtinacy that

could help her to ſuſtain it — ſhe drooped beneath the conflict, which

"Like a worm in the bud
Prey'd on her damaſk cheek."

The flattering change was alarming: reaſon aſſured me it was ill-placed auſterity, when innocence became a ſufferer; and her ſlighteſt concurrence is, in our imagination, ſufficient to conſecrate the emotions of the heart. Mine repreſented the folly of declining offered happineſs, leſt evil ſhould be the reſult: in this war of the paſſions, the doubtful conqueſt was confirmed by an unforeſeen event. — I found myſelf one evening alone with Louiſa at my brother's lodgings: we were expatiating on their happineſs—I ſnatched her hand —I preſſed it to my lips; love was the language of my eyes, and my tongue would have given utterance to love:— but an unuſual outcry upon the ſtairs, with the name of Henry frequently repeated, reſtored me to myſelf:—I ran to the door, where the firſt object that preſented

preſented itſelf was my father; I would have embraced him, but he turned from me with diſdain. At this time Mr. and Mrs. Edgerton, who had ſpent the afternoon with Sophia's mother, returned; they entered the room with their uſual ſprightlineſs, and Frederick had opened his mouth, the ſmile of good-humour on his countenance, when Sir William's voice fixed him the ſtatue of ſurprize.

I have introduced you Emma, into a ſcene of confuſion; a ſcene it would be difficult to deſcribe: ſuffice it, that what we could offer, was too trifling to ſoften him that evening; and all our endeavours proved ever after inſufficient.—Through his inflexibility, Frederick was reduced to ſee his Sophia want many comforts he languiſhed to beſtow —As monſieur de — enjoyed but a ſmall patrimony, he had nothing to give his daughter; and on Sir William's remittances, though augmented to the utmoſt of my power, they were

unable to live. In this diſtreſs a flattering proſpect offered, which his friends earneſtly intreated Frederick to embrace; immenſe fortunes were daily brought from the Eaſt Indies; and the ſituation they wiſhed him to accept, was peculiarly advantageous. — The hope that he ſhould be ſoon able to place his Sophia in the ſphere where ſhe was born to ſhine, induced him to conſent.—The morning he was to quit us arrived—we parted, and felt the parting, as brothers, and as friends.—He approached his wife, pale, and almoſt frantic with diſtreſs, he ſtrained her to his heart; "My beſt Edgerton, ſaid the beauteous comforter, repreſs your grief; misfortunes will either ceaſe to purſue us, or the time arrive when we ſhall triumph in them."—More ſhe intended to have ſaid, but the guſhing tears prevented utterance, and when ſhe would have blamed his ſorrow, ſhe yielded to her own. Her adoring huſband claſped her ſtill cloſer to his boſom;

ſom; then putting her hand in mine, with a look more forcible than language recommended her to my care, and left us with precipitation, as doubtful if he could yet maintain the conqueſt.—Sophia ſupported this unforeſeen event with the heroiſm that peculiarly diſtinguiſhed her. As the partner of his heart, ſhe felt the ſeparation, yet bore it without repining.—She wept his abſence, yet truſted Providence would reſtore the bleſſing that had been reſigned with ſubmiſſion. She informed me of a circumſtance ſhe had concealed from my brother; and which diſcloſed, muſt have augmented the pangs of parting. Certain, ſhe deſerved his love, ſhe had no apprehenſions abſence could weaken it; and diſdained to urge a title, which, tho' it might fix her deeper in his heart, muſt ſubject him to numberleſs inquietudes.—She anticipated the pleaſure of preſenting him a blooming prattler; of ſharing with him the delightful taſk of education.—Louiſa

was conſtantly with her, and with infinite regret I left theſe charming companions.—Sir William's appetite and ſpirits daily declined, and the phyſicians recommended change of air.—As if happineſs and health were local, we fondly imagine thoſe places that once afforded, ſtill have them in reſerve:—My father in his youth had ſpent much agreeable time in Italy, and determined again to viſit it.—I accompanied him, but not finding that part of the world more enlivening than the climate he had quitted, we returned long before the appointed time.

Soon after our arrival, under pretence of viſiting a friend in the country, I left Sir William; but Paris was my deſtined route.—When I entered Mrs. Edgerton's houſe, Louiſa came to me, her eyes red with weeping: "My Sophia" was all ſhe could diſtinctly utter, and claſping her hands, ſhe ſunk upon a couch.—Alas! I learnt her friends valuable life was deſpaired of—they informed

formed her of my arrival, and ſhe welcomed me with rapture: our interview was inexpreſſibly moving; the phyſicians entreated ſhe would ſuffer me to leave the room, but ſhe condemned their cruelty: "Edgerton, ſhe continued, it has been my ultimate wiſh to leave my Frederick ſome traces of his Sophia.—Vainly I hoped to have embraced my huſband; but this infant will liſp his welcome here—While I wait his entrance to thoſe realms of reſt, where cruelty can never enter, or ſorrow part us more."—The ſmile of tranſport brightened her countenance, ſhe conſigned her little innocent to my care, and her pure ſpirit fled to the abodes of bliſs.—Louiſa was too young to receive the precious charge; and to an honeſt pair whoſe care and ability we were convinced was equal to the undertaking, I intruſted it.—That the worthy Edmonds had the greateſt affection for Frederick and myſelf, I was before convinced.—Soon after theſe affairs were

ſettled, I received a mandate to attend Sir William, and I reached him juſt time enough to receive his laſt bleſſing. The proſpect of the fortune I ſhould inherit gave me ſatisfaction, when I conſidered I ſhould ſhare it with my Louiſa, and join with her to educate the infant Emma.—Alas! how diſtant are our wiſhes, when poſſeſſed from affording the happineſs we fondly imagined their accompliſhment would convey.—Immediately on my return to Paris, I called on Edmonds, but he had left his habitation, and his friends were ignorant whither he had repaired.—A ſervant who had lived with him gave me a note, his maſter had ordered him to deliver, in which he informed me that neceſſity had compelled him to quit Paris; but that his lovely charge ſhould find in him a father, till the time when he muſt reſtore her to her real parent, or yield her to my care; that he hoped he ſhould be able to return, or that his ſituation would be ſoon ſettled, when he

he would throw himſelf at the feet of his benefactor.—Louiſa was ſome miles from Paris, at the Chateau de —; on peruſing this note, ſhe joined in regretting his departure.—It was now I openly avowed my love, and enforced the merit of the long attachment with every argument affection could inſpire. The bluſh of modeſt tenderneſs crimſoned her glowing cheek; but was quickly ſucceeded by a death-like paleneſs—a paleneſs that long had ſat upon her face.—Whenever I renewed my ſuit, ſhe ſmiled, and raiſed her eyes to heaven, "My dear Sir Harry, ceaſe I I entreat you.—I could once have reſigned the world without a ſigh—but while I liſten to you, life aſſumes new charms."—

"Yes, my Louiſa, our hours ſhall be diverſified by varied happineſs."—Alas! a fatal conſumption daſhed my hopes, and the ſun that was to have beſtowed her hand, witneſſed the ſad reverſe.—I felt all the anguiſh of a lover

torn from the object he adored; and had ſunk beneath my ſorrow, but that the little Emma, now the ſole object of my care, inceſſantly preſented herſelf to my remembrance—robbed of Louiſa, Frederick, and Sophia, I loved them all in you.

But misfortune ſtill purſued me, I received a letter from Edmonds, diſcloſing his reaſon for leaving Paris; he was falſely accuſed of having joined in ſome papers deemed treaſonous, and found it neceſſary to ſecrete himſelf—he informed me that he had retired to Soiſſons, and that he would there wait my commands—I ſet out immediately, but on my arrival, I learnt (from his only confidant) that his retreat had been diſcovered, and that he had been obliged to quit Soiſſons the day before. —By ſtrange fatality, tho' each endeavouring to find the other, we never met: nor was this unſucceſsful ſearch, my only cauſe of ſorrow; no letters from Frederick had reached me, and

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all enquiries after him proved unſatisfactory.—The felicity I now enjoy in recovering my charming niece, is moderated by the apprehenſion her father never will partake it."

When we are moſt fortunate, my Eliza, there is ſtill a ſomething wanting to render happineſs complete:—if the idea diſpleaſes you, we will forget it. I hate thoſe gloomy mortals, whom Pope deſcribes, as

"Pleaſed with nothing, if not bleſt with all;"

—but in the preſent cauſe, methinks the ſentiment it ſprings from, ſanctifies the murmur. Laſt week my uncle conducted me to his houſe, he ſeparately introduced his ſervants, and ordered them to acknowledge their miſtreſs.—The manſion is charmingly ſituated on the ſummit of a hill—his grounds are bounded by a winding river, that ſometimes loſes itſelf among the trees, at others, falls in natural caſcades—from the window we ſee the cattle grazing on the diſtant meadows

meadows—the myrtle, the orange, the holly, and a variety of beautiful evergreens, render even this ſeaſon of the year delightful.—I conſider myſelf, Eliza, doubly indebted to Providence, who by ſuffering me in adverſity to learn the value of affluence, taught me to enjoy, what, in the time his wiſdom appointed, he beſtowed. It was with regret I liſtened to my uncle, when he propoſed our ſpending a few weeks at Bath, for I confeſs I hoped to have paſſed the winter here. To make others happy is our beſt tribute of gratitude; and their landlord's preſence would have enlivened his chearful tenants.—Sir Harry ſtudies my wiſhes; but when we are certain our deſires will be complied with, it is not eaſy to expreſs them.—The beginning of next month is fixed for our journey, and immediately after our arrival you ſhall hear from your affectionate

EMMA.

LETTER XXXIX.

Miſs CHARLOTTE DARCY to Miſs ARABELA OWEN.

OH, Arabella, I can ſupport it no longer;—not that I have myſelf the leaſt regard for the man; but that *that* ugly creature ſhould triumph over me is intolerable!—This inſtant colonel Leſter's ſervant brought a letter addreſſed to her, and as ſhe was not in the way, I e'en made free with the contents. Love and rapture were the ſole ideas it conveyed to her, rage and revenge to me.—Next Thurſday is fixed for the completion of his happineſs; but if indignation, addreſs, and ingenuity have power, their union never ſhall be accompliſhed.—Arabella, I die with envy — to be deſerted for Belvedera Finchley!—but I ſhall let him ſee that Charlotte Darcy does not ſo eaſily reſign her power.

Did you ever ſee the creature?—No, I believe not, or you would hardly credit

credit the account I ſend you.—I cannot conceive what firſt induced my mother to receive her in the family; but ſhe is ſo mighty compaſſionate—ſo fooliſhly charitable—upon my word I have no patience with her.—Belvidera too, found out her foible, and made her court to her by adopting it, and through Patty Harlowe's affair was vaſtly in favour with the old lady.—I always told Mrs. Darcy ſhe was an artful huſſy, but ſhe was ſo biggoted to her own opinions—though to be ſure, no one would have imagined the girl had attractions to engage a man of faſhion—an aukward thing, who but for my mother's ridiculous generoſity, had never been initiated into polite life—and who ſtill (wanting ſenſe to adopt my example) retains all the ſimplicity of the nurſery. I am really aſtoniſhed at colonel Leſter's folly—the wretch! after having ſeen *me*, to take notice of Belvidera!—Oh for vengeance, worthy of

CHARLOTTE DARCY.

LETTER XL.

Miſs EDGERTON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

Bath—Monday.

YOUR pardon, my dear lady Eliza, muſt be a free gift, for I am aſhamed to plead for it —three weeks at Bath! ah, chide me, my ſweet friend; puniſh me in any other manner than by *your* ſilence, and I will kiſs the rod.—Already is your Emma tired of this brilliant circle, where vanity uſurps the name of emulation, extravagance is honoured as generoſity, and diſſipation wears the maſk of pleaſure—and to many others I am convinced it is equally irkſome; but fearing to diſſent from opinion they ſee ſupported by all around them, they feign amuſement where they never received it, and ſtrengthen the deluſion. —A fine lady, firſt makes a ſacrifice of her taſte; her heart and underſtanding follow, till the whole woman is engroſſed by faſhion.—In their idea there

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is nothing ſo dreadful as ſingularity; no matter why, but if Mrs. Such-a-one has opinions of her own, that is, if ſhe dreſſes, viſits or retires as inclination or prudence direct, ſhe is immediately an ill-bred creature, brought up and inſtructed by nobody knows who — and true enough, for her guides, to them are utter ſtrangers — reaſon and reflection.

In the various changes of my life, I have learnt to diſtinguiſh flattery from kindneſs; and the mere exerciſe of the tongue, from the language of the heart. My honeſt ruſtics were ſtrangers to profeſſion, but I confided in their friendſhip, and was not deceived. — Here praiſe, vows, and adulation are inceſſantly aimed at my heart; but they are too impotent to reach it: — from the men (with whom the difficulty of attainment ſtamps the value of a conqueſt) we have learnt to ſcorn an eaſy prize. — They have ſomewhere heard that practice is neceſſary to attain perfection—

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my Emma, ſhall women be ſound paſſive while they gain experience at our expence, and every coxcomb publiſhes his "Art of Love."—But I will introduce you to my *admirers*—and firſt,

"My lord advances with majeſtic mien,
Smit with the mighty pleaſure to be ſeen."

Let him come forward, and declare himſelf a being perpetually buſied in diſcovering the defects of his acquaintance; one of thoſe moraliſts who view every object on the dark ſide, and he thinks others incapable of great actions, becauſe *he* is always employed in trifles.

Mr. L— is falſely ſtyled "a man of pleaſure;" he has found the deſpicable art of debaſing the moſt extenſive genius, of ſtripping ſprightlineſs of allurement, and wit of admiration; moſt admirably ſkilled to "puzzle right, and varniſh wrong," the abilities he poſſeſſes, but ſhew us what he wants, while lively parts, and a fertile imagination, render more conſpicuous the depravity of his heart.

I re-

I retired into my cloſet, and dedicated the morning to my friend;—but they knock at my door — they force me to accompany them to the pump-room—yet, this they tell me is the place where all purſue their own inclinations. In the world, Eliza, it is neceſſary to follow the multitude, though it ſhould be ſometimes to do evil; and thoſe are ever happieſt, who with the greateſt facility can regulate their deſires by the caprice of others.

Tueſday.

This morning Sir Harry obligingly accompanied me in an airing, that I might take a view of the country.—A few miles from Bath an elegant phaeton paſſed us with the utmoſt velocity, and one of the horſes taking fright, overturned it: — my uncle ſtopped our poſtillion, and ordered the ſervants to give their aſſiſtance; himſelf alighted from the carriage and followed them. I was happy to learn at his return, that

thoug h

though a lady in the phaeton was much frightened, no hurt had been received; and yet Sir Harry appeared thoughtful and melancholy.—At dinner we had a large company; though he entertained his gueſts with his uſual politeneſs, I could diſcern he wiſhed them abſent.—As ſoon as they were gone, he called for his hat:—and I flew to communicate this ſtrange intelligence.—I fear, Eliza, they have not diſcloſed the truth; yet the ſervants aſſured me there was no miſchief, and though they did not know to whom the carriage belonged, their maſter and the gentleman in it ſeemed perfectly acquainted.—When I enquired the name, Sir Harry avoided a direct anſwer.—How unaccountable this myſtery!—but he comes, and will ſurely ſatisfy the curioſity he has raiſed.

Still in the dark, Eliza, and returned with no other knowledge, than a conviction that it is impoſſible to renew a ſubject

ſubject which gives pain to thoſe whom we regard.—Sir Harry is ſtrangely intereſted, and who, more proper for a confidant than his grateful niece—Ah, then, does he doubt the prudence or the affection of his

EMMA.

LETTER XLI.

Sir HARRY EDGERTON to EDWARD WILLIS, Eſq.

YOUR letter, Willis, arrived too late—the day before I received it, Sydney paſſed us on the road—the morning was delightful, and willing to enjoy it in its utmoſt perfection, lady Juliet had deſired to accompany him in the phaeton.—Unfortunately the ſteeds had no leſs ſpirit than their maſter, and overturned the carriage. They continued, however, their route to Bath, and I determined to keep Emma ignorant of his preſence, and to feign ſome cauſe that ſhould enforce our return to H—

I for-

I forbore mentioning the ſubject till I had called on Sydney.—Heavens, how awful! how unexpected the intelligence I then received; Auguſtus has loſt his wife—the fright by bringing on a miſcarriage occaſioned her deceaſe—My friend is inexpreſſibly affected, his ſenſibility can be equalled only by his vivacity.—Amiable Sydney—how infinitely the feelings of the *huſband* adorn the *man*.—Lady Amelia and Fanny arrived here yeſterday; they join his ſorrows: ah, Willis, in multiplying theſe ſweet connections, we but open new inlets to miſery.

"To me my fair one, in the bliſsful band,
Of Hymen, never gave her hand;
The joys of wedded love were never mine."

And yet, my heart has bled; it has ſuſtained the pangs of ſeparation; and in contemplating Sydney's loſs, I but renew my griefs.—Adieu, Willis, by communicating theſe melancholy ideas, I ſhall infect you with the contagious ſadneſs.

EDGERTON.

LETTER XLII.

Miſs CHARLOTTE DARCY to Miſs ARABELLA OWEN.

HOW eaſily theſe men are made our dupes—here has been the colonel raving againſt women, who he ſwears affect the ſemblance of every virtue, only to laugh at the honeſt credulity that confides in them.—Ha! ha! ha! you muſt own, Charlotte Darcy a divine projector, when even the *diſcerning* Leſter can be impoſed on—the man is this inſtant gone from my dreſſing room, his face lengthened half a yard beyond its uſual dimenſions, and ſhaking his wiſe noddle, as if ambitious to imitate the mandarins on my chimney-piece.—Oh, you was never witneſs to a ſcene ſo diverting, and your Charlotte acts the ſympathizing friend to perfection.—Deluded fool! who but himſelf would be ſo deceived.—"Punctual as lovers to the moment ſworn," he reached our houſe;

houſe; tript up ſtairs with more than common agility.—"Not quite ſo faſt Sir," and I contrived prettily enough, to meet him on the landing place—the man appeared a little diſconcerted—conſcious guilt flew in his face: Ah, friend, thought I, a ſeal is no bar to curioſity—pretending, however, perfect ignorance of his reaſon for this early viſit, I ſhewed him into a room—begged him to be ſeated, and talked of a thouſand indifferent things.—Belvidera was frequently on his tongue, and when at laſt he enquired for her, I roſe and rang the bell.—"Molly, will you inform Miſs Finchley, colonel Leſter requeſts her company."—She obeyed, but returned ſoon after—Miſs was not in her apartment! and the footman ſaw her get into a hack between ſix and ſeven in the morning.—My ſwain ſat upon thorns, one minute he was at the window; the next, rubbing his hands by the fire-ſide—ſtill expecting his fair

one's return—one hour followed another. — It muſt be acknowledged, (thought I, as he paced up and down the room) the creature *has* ſome "odd, becoming graces."— He threatened to follow her—to be ſure ſome wicked raviſher had robbed him of his treaſure: I contrived, however, by talking of her, to detain him till it was too late to put this ſcheme in execution; and tomorrow the colonel is to commence knight-errant.

My mother puts on her ſpectacles, looks in Leſter's face moſt compaſſionately—pities him of courſe.—"My dear, colonel Leſter, ſays ſhe, holding out her hand with authority, we muſt learn to ſupport theſe unforeſeen diſappointments."—"Ah, madam, he replies, I had ſuffered my thoughts to dwell without reſtraint on future happineſs; that happineſs which Miſs Finchley was to have communicated and received: but ſhe has deſerted me in

in the moment when ſhe ſhould have bleſt my wiſhes.—Can the lovely Belvidera then, practice the deceit to which ſhe is a ſtranger?—Can the moſt perfect of her ſex be falſe."—I endeavoured to conſole him. "Amiable Miſs Darcy, cried he, how kind this friendly ſolicitude; the dear girl had many admirers, whoſe pride, more powerful than their love, revolted at the idea of receiving her as a wife; and who may have adopted this method of terrifying the beauty they could not ſeduce—the thought, continued he, is agony; Oh, Miſs Darcy, I fly to ſeek my Belvidera."

"For heavens ſake, colonel Leſter, defer your reſolution; it would now be dark ere you could commence your ſearch: Miſs Finchley indeed, ſeldom went out without informing us, but we had no right to demand an account of her actions; and as we had formed no particular plan of amuſement for the

day, ſhe perhaps ſeized it, to viſit her friends."—

My mother agreed with me, but the colonel had reaſons, (with which, thanks to my ingenuity, I was acquainted) for ſuppoſing otherwiſe—however I was ſucceſsful in detaining him; and now, Arabella, if you have not ſenſe to divine my ſcheme, you hardly deſerve the confidence of

CHARLOTTE DARCY.

LETTER XLIII.

Miſs EDGERTON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

AH, Eliza, I have ſeen that once animated countenance overſpread with melancholy—thoſe ſparkling eyes, dropping the tear of ſenſibility—they perſuade him to take a ſhort tour to diſſipate his melancholy, but he ſighs and

and fixes his eyes upon your Emma. This morning I have received the following billet.

" Yes, madam, in compliance with my friends, I ſeek variety: but pleaſure—but happineſs, can be found only in my Emma.—Your beauty, Miſs Edgerton, muſt juſtify the man who diſdains ſubmiſſion to common forms, that have power over us, only becauſe they are eſtabliſhed.—I quit the woman I adore, I leave her ſurrounded by admirers, and can I do otherwiſe than apprehend, that long before propriety will admit my claim, her hand ſhould be diſpoſed of.—The envious talk loudly of my gaiety; but they will ever ſatirize, what they cannot imitate—however, I ſee my errors; and I dare acknowledge them—may I flatter myſelf, my lovely Emma will reward thoſe virtues, and that conſtancy ſhe has inſpired; that ſhe will one day bleſs her

SYDNEY.

Sir Harry hung upon my chair while I read it—the ſervant waited, and implements for writing were on the table, I took up a pen, and on the cover of his billet, I wrote theſe lines.

" My happineſs depends upon your conduct — go; but remember, Mr. Sydney, he that aſpires to my heart muſt merit it; and that I never will liſten to the *lover*, when I cannot approve the *man*." Something far different I ſhould have ſaid; but when the the pen is not reſtrained by ceremony, it will expreſs our thoughts—I would have torn it, but my uncle prevented me.—" How long, ſaid he, has it been cuſtomary with my Emma, to treat her friends with reſerve—and is not Mr. Sydney among the number. —I bluſhed, and ſealed the paper.—But ſurely, my Eliza, he muſt be convinced of my affection; and his apprehenſions of my inconſtancy are impertinent. I have diſcernment to guide my choice; and

and reſolution to perſiſt in it.—Sevigny, who came here with lady Amelia, accompanies his friend: they leave Bath to-morrow, and, Mr. Sydney propoſes waiting on lady Juliet's relations in London, and then begins his tour.—Ah, my friend, in this ſituation it is almoſt guilty to think on future happineſs—poor lady Juliet—the more I anticipate felicity, the faſter flow my tears for you.

LETTER LXIV.

Miſs CHARLOTTE DARCY to Miſs ARABELLA OWEN.

WELL, it muſt be confeſſed, even a Machiavel muſt bow to my ſuperior abilities.—Afflictions, my dear, teach theſe men humility: and Leſter is mightily improved through my inſtructions—ſo civil, ſo condeſcending; "My dear Miſs Darcy."—"My ami-

able Charlotte." Ha! ha! ha!—then ſo enraged againſt Belvidera:—" he gazed on her, and miſtook art for tenderneſs—hypocriſy for candour"—Deluded fool!—Oh, Arabella, this vengeance is divine. He was here early, and had ordered his horſes to meet him; but againſt that I had provided.—" I fear, Miſs Darcy, (ſaid he, looking at his watch) my ſervant has miſunderſtood me."—Juſt as he uttered theſe words, my chaiſe came to the door.—" Colonel Leſter, cried I, my mother will be down in a few minutes; I was going to call on a friend of miſs Finchley's a few miles from town;—you will excuſe me ſir."

" Give me leave to accompany you: we will leave a meſſuage, that when my ſervant arrives he may follow us with the horſes."

I pretended myſelf averſe to the propoſal, but objected in a manner that ſtrengthened his reſolution. — Yes, thought

thought I, as he handed me to the chariot; if I am now ſucceſsful, Arabella Owen will do juſtice to my abilities.—I took care in our ride to drop ſome hints of a prior attachment, of another lover, once encouraged by Belvidera:—he ſwallowed the bait; "Ah, miſs Darcy, though your generous friendſhip would conceal her falſehood, I fear I am indeed deceived.—Poor Leſter, you was a true prophet; and yet the *chef d'œuvre* was in reſerve.

Some miles beyond the bridge a poſtchaiſe paſſed us—"Heavens, 'tis my Belvidera! exclaimed the colonel—cruel, diſſembling girl—but I will tear her from his arms"—then looking out of the window, he called to the poſtillions to ſtop; but they had received directions; I had likewiſe appointed the time when Belvidera's *deliverer* ſhould convey her from her country reſidence, and had ordered my ſervant to ride before, as a ſignal for him to commence

the lover—and the girl I was aſſured would be too ſenſible of his Quixotiſm, to refuſe liſtening to his profeſſions:—the plan ſucceeded as I wiſhed, my ſpark ſat by her ſide, one arm thrown careleſsly round her, while with the other he raiſed her hand to his lips:—ſhe endeavoured to diſengage herſelf; but Leſter thought her reluctance proceeded ſolely from our meeting:—"Let us return, miſs Darcy, he exclaimed, our ſearch has proved indeed ſucceſsful; it ſhall inſtruct me to tear her from my heart."

The poor colonel rails at women with inceivable grace: ah, without doubt he is vaſtly indebted to your Charlotte, and but for her, had wanted an opportunity of exerting all his talents.

LETTER XLV.

From the ſame to the ſame.

AND ſo really, Arabella, you are at a loſs to diſcover how I have executed my ſcheme—wonderful!—but you was *never* remarkable for penetration—how then ſhould you comprehend the charming project?—On the day fixed for the wedding, I roſe with the ſun, and entered Belvidera's chamber; "My dear miſs Finchley, cried I, I have an engagement for the day—Lady Lucy Aubrey deſigns to call on me at ten o'clock, and I want exceedingly to purchaſe a few trifles at the neareſt millener's.—A coach is at the door, and we ſhall be back before Mrs. Darcy is ready for breakfaſt—will you accompany me?"—She agreed without heſitation—in the appointed ſtreet we paſſed the hero of the piece;—"God bleſs me, Belvidera! I exclaimed,

there's Mr. Eldridge—a relation of ours, juſt come to London."—He ſaw me, ſtopped the coach, and at my repeated requeſt, agreed to return with us to breakfaſt.—At length we reached the ſhop—it was too late; I could not think of detaining my friends, and ſtepping out, deſired the coach might turn, and I would be with them inſtantly:—the driver ſat off with amazing rapidity; and my ſwain, fearing his fair charge ſhould be alarmed, to conceal her danger, drew up the wooden blinds.—Miſs, I ſuppoſe had more diſcernment than he wiſhed; and more reſolution too; however, by ſecuring her hands, and ſtifling her voice with his handkerchief, he made ſhift to conduct her to her country lodging. Here the girl aſſumed the heroine, and was ſo perfect in her part, the women of the houſe, though accuſtomed to ſuch viſitors, were ſoftened.—The next day, her kind ſtars ſent ſome valorous knight

to

to her relief—the fair damſel was diſcovered weeping at her window—and beauty in diſtreſs you know, Arabella, is irreſiſtible—to ſee, and love, were ſynonymous.—Oh, I can aſſure you, Harry acts the adoring inamorato to perfection—how ſhould it be otherwiſe? for when I gave him inſtructions for his conduct, "There now, ſaid I, look on *my* face—recollect the ſoft things ſuch beauty ſhould inſpire, and repeat them all to Belvidera—but be ſure, continued I, that the whole time you converſe with her, you figure to yourſelf miſs Darcy is before you—that it is her you ſpeak to; and then believe me, friend, ſuch charms will make you eloquent."—Well, this ſucceeded—the duenna's contrived to be moſt accidentally out of the way; a poſtchaiſe was ready, and the pretty fool, all gratitude to her generous deliverer, jumped into it.—In the mean time, Charlotte Darcy was not unemployed,

ployed, but brought the colonel to the field of action;—he was however ſoon ſatisfied, and we returned to Bruton-ſtreet, where I alighted; he, I knew, wiſhed for privacy, that he might indulge his grief, and I ordered the chariot to convey him home.

A few minutes after, Belvidera reached the door—"Tremble, miſs Finchley, cried I, for you can no longer impoſe on us:—my mother and colonel Leſter are undeceived; nor ſhall an abandoned hypocrite find ſhelter here."

"Ah, miſs Darcy, ſhe replied, before whom then ſhould the guiltleſs tremble? Colonel Leſter will be one day convinced of my innocence—till then, I know it—and am content."

She left me with diſdain; and where the girl now is, heaven knows;—for after her flight (which I had taken care ſhould be pretty public) it was impoſſible, you know, that we ſhould receive her.—Well, Arabella! in future times, when

when men ſhall dwell with praiſe on inſtances of addreſs and ingenuity, this ſhall be produced, and the world confeſs it was done by

CHARLOTTE DARCY.

LETTER XLVI.

Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK to Miſs EDGERTON.

WELL, it muſt be confeſſed, Mr. Beauclerk can vie even with Petruchio in the taming of *his* ſhrew. Still muſt I date my letters from this dreary ſpot, where your friend is a very Laplander in ſupporting the rigours of the ſeaſon. — Heigh-ho, Emma! we give theſe lords of the creation ſo much reaſon to depend upon our integrity, they think a double claim to our allegiance unneceſſary; and when once obedience becomes a duty, give themſelves little trouble to ſecure our inclinations —ah,

—ah, my friend, I have ſtill ſtronger reaſons — but matrimonial diſagreements ſhould never be diſcloſed; and a huſband's unkindneſs, is then only juſt, when we dare complain of it.—In my conſcience, I believe ſome uneaſineſſes are thrown in with the prieſt's benediction, and in honour to the reverend father they continue the concomitants of marriage. Here then am I, buried in this deſart place, my days ſolely diverſified by rain or hail, impending clouds or falling ſnows — while my Emma, unconſcious of the lowering ſeaſon, meaſures her hours by triumphs; and having ſubjected all hearts to her ſway, like the brave Macedonian youth, who wanted worlds to conquer, ſhe weeps for ſubjects to enſlave.—Surrounded by theſe numerous admirers, eſtabliſh it early in your mind, that falſhood lurks beneath profeſſion; nor yield to any other than the courtſhip of the heart. I received your

letters;

letters; and even from your firſt introduction, have been charmed with Sir Harry Edgerton—how great muſt be the merit of that man, whom the diſtinction of being my Emma's uncle, cannot raiſe higher in my eſteem.—Poor Louiſa! I felt more for her, than for the equally unfortunate Sophia:—our own ſituation too often regulates our pity—and for the pathetic, "each man's ſecret ſtandard's in his mind:"—"She never told her love," but fell a victim to maiden pride:—as the taper near extinct burns with redoubled brightneſs; happineſs illumined her laſt days, and flamed but to expire.—Pardon, Emma, if theſe melancholy reflections intrude upon the jovial hour.—indeed I am this morning a very unfit correſpondent; unleſs, as a monarch in the midſt of triumphs was daily informed that he was mortal, you wiſh a *memento mori*; and for that office, believe

lieve me, no candidate will offer more ſuitable than your

ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

LETTER XLVII.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Eſq; to Sir GEORGE DANVERS.

Paris.

OH! certainly a ſecond Cervantes will riſe to record the achievements of the heroic Sydney—or the valorous knight of the woeful countenance—damſels reſcued—plots diſcovered—ha! ha! ha! *entre nous* George, the ſpinſters at Bath were vaſtly *outré* in adviſing me to ſeek variety in foreign courts—a genius like mine never could want amuſement—beſides, it is abſolute cruelty to leave the country where one can be ſo ſerviceable—to leave the women, "like lilies drooping"—ah, my

my fair ones, well may ye mourn, for Sydney's gone,

"And pleaſure is no more."

Hey, Danvers! gone to fire another Troy.—Sevigny looks over my ſhoulder: "What, Auguſtus! ſtill in the old ſtrain?"

"Why faith, Lucius, I believe I did reſolve to recount our quixotiſm—but (yawning) prithee, take the pen thyſelf."

He immediately made off; and not without reaſon friend, thought I, for really the ſubject requires my animated ſtile.

Sauntering one morning up St. James's-ſtreet, hanging on Sevigny's arm, and conſidering how I ſhould employ the next hour; a pretty face in a milliner's ſhop inſtantly decided the debate, and we were as inſtantly in the houſe.—"Bring us ſome ſword knots, child," ſaid Lucius, carleſsly drawing out his purſe; then ſmiling in her face,

face, "Faith thou art very pretty," continued he.—The girl, however, ſeemed to have nothing feminine about her but her beauty; and paying for the ribbon that beauty had diſpoſed of, we turned to leave her—Obſerving an elegant female croſs the ſhop, and on ſeeing us, hold a handkerchief to her face, "Who have you there, my dear," ſaid I;—"A young woman, ſhe replied, my miſtreſs ſometimes employs;" and was proceeding to ſatisfy my curioſity, but the fair one had reached the door: which not opening ſo readily as ſhe expected, Sevigny flew to aſſiſt her. Heavens, Sydney! he exclaimed, it is Miſs Finchley."—And ſeizing her hand, led her to a ſmall parlour behind the ſhop. There, Danvers, we learnt—upon my ſoul, I forget what. Suffice it, I conveyed Belvidera to an aunt of lady Juliet's, who received her with pleaſure. That I waited on Leſter — convinced him of his miſtake—conducted him to her

her feet—and ſtayed a week longer in London to preſent him with her hand.

The day after the wedding, pretending perfect ignorance of her machinations, I called on Charlotte Darcy; rattled of their felicity, his love and tranſports—In ſhort, completely mortified the poor devil.—Then changed my tone, vowed Leſter was reſolved to diſcover the fiend that had ſo long deferred their union—laughed at the ill-concerted plot, which only folly could have planned, or envy have executed—then dwelt on Belvidera's charms, her happineſs had given new roſes to her cheeks, and Leſter idolized her.—"Good God! cried I, obſerving Charlotte turn pale, are you not well?—the poor girl to be ſure was greatly to be pitied—a whole night confined in that confounded houſe—tho' really, my dear Miſs Darcy, this concern for your friend is very obliging—but the goodneſs of your heart, madam—Ah, I am convinced

ed colonel and Mrs. Leſter think themſelves infinitely indebted to your friendſhip."—And looking at my watch, proteſted I had forgot that I had promiſed them to give my opinion of ſome jewels — and left her burſting with rage and envy. We have been in Paris ſome time, and propoſe continuing here longer than we firſt intended; for really the poor ſouls finds us ſo neceſſary to their happineſs, it would be cruelty to deprive them of our company—Ah, Danvers, what is this punctilio, to which we ſacrifice?—Faſhion regulates the feelings of the heart, and we have loaded felicity with the fetters of ceremony — but Miſs Edgerton is above theſe common forms; yet, in obedience to her commands, I ſhall ſtay here a few weeks longer, and hit on ſome method to "laſh the lingering moments into ſpeed." — Emma, to ſoften abſence, makes Fanny's letters the vouchers of her conſtancy: ſweet girl! ſhe reſerves her

her hand for Sydney— and really, my dear Sir George,

—"Young men of ſuch ſpirit,
Will ever attain the reward of their merit."

LETTER XLVIII.

Miſs EDGERTON to Lady ELIZA BEAUCLERK.

OH, my dear Eliza, it is impoſſible to conceive a more agreeable party! the marquis is the moſt amiable of men; Fanny's happineſs has encreaſed her vivacity—Sir Harry is tranſported with the general joy, and lady Amelia, not the leaſt jovial in the throng. "And in the name of wonder, you exclaim, what is the ſource of this uncommon gaiety?—How diſagreeable to deſcend to narrative; however, child, to ſatisfy your curioſity, you muſt know that we have found miſs Sydney's Montreal: the firſt *coup-d'œil*, I confeſs was attend-

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ed with no very agreeable circumſtance; —nothing that promiſed the felicity that ſucceeded. Lady Amelia, miſs Sydney, Sir Harry, and myſelf, went laſt week to the rooms.—"Charming couple," was the firſt ſound that ſtruck our ears—of courſe three women were not deſtitute of curioſity; we preſſed forward to give our opinion of the dancers—"how gracefully they move," exclaimed I, turning to Fanny—ſhe caught hold of my arm—"let us retire Emma."—The dear girl was the picture of death; pale, trembling, diſordered—I accompanied her to a more private part of the room; "Ah, miſs Edgerton, ſaid ſhe, had any one told me Montreal was inconſtant—" She would have proceeded, but the lover ſhe accuſed was at her ſide. He was all love and tranſport—his Fanny's heart and language, tenderneſs chaſtened by modeſty.—He introduced the duke and ducheſs.—"Happily, (ſaid his

his grace) in compliance with my ſon's ardent ſolicitations, I had this morning given that conſent, which had I before ſeen Miſs Sydney, he ſhould not ſo often have requeſted."

Montreal informed us, that to oblige his mother, he had attended her to the rooms; and the next day he was to have reached Acton-Hall.—Ceremony only, retards their union; and lady Amelia would not yield one point of punctilio for the univerſe.—The good old ſoul is ſo buſy, ſo delighted, ſo pleaſed with her aſſumed importance, that Miſs Sydney and myſelf are inconceivably diverted; while Montreal's native politeneſs frequently yields to his impatience.—Bleſs me! a poſt-chaiſe—and the moſt agreeable man imaginable, alights from it—Sir Harry flies to him—he embraces him.—Ah, Eliza, my heart anticipates felicity.

Sir HARRY EDGERTON in continuation.

Yes, madam, the father—the brother is reſtored— and Emma commiſſions me to diſcloſe her happineſs — come, lady Eliza, and convince the dear girl it may be ſtill augmented. — She would herſelf have concluded her letter, but this day we cannot yield her even to friendſhip—but you muſt join us madam; if affection is no inducement, be not deaf to curioſity; and we have tales of wonder to relate—perils by ſea and land.

Emma is by my ſide — ſhe claims the pen—and on my refuſing to deliver it, would have me tell you how nearly ſhe had loſt her father, even when in ſight of England: but he is reſtored to us—and melancholy reflections can no longer find entrance in the mind of

HENRY EDGERTON.

LETTER LXIX.

Sir HARRY EDGERTON to EDWARD WILLIS, Eſq.

COME, my dear Edward, and be witneſs of our happineſs, a happineſs which at my brother's arrival, I conſidered as incapable of addition; yet every hour is marked by its encreaſe. The other morning, Emma with great gaiety rattled over the keys of her harpſichord, when the door opened, and Sydney was announced—As he entered the room, Frederick ſtarted from his chair, "My hero, my deliverer," cried he, embracing him; then preſenting him to Emma, "My child, continued he, this is the man to whom you owe your father."—Auguſtus caſt down his eyes and bluſhed, but Miſs Edgerton approached, and offering her hand with inimitable grace, "My dear, Mr. Sydney, ſaid ſhe, how perfect my felicity,

when duty gives a ſanction to inclination, and the judgment ſtrengthens the propenſities of the heart."

He preſſed the hand ſhe offered to his lips;—and my brother related the accident to which before he had only ſlightly alluded; Sidney all the while endeavouring by a thouſand ſprightly ſallies to draw his Emma's attention from a narrative, the ſubſtance of which was, that coming from Calais to Dover, the ſea was calm, and their paſſage uncommonly tedious; Sydney ſtepped into the boat, and called to his friends in the packet to join him: they agreed, and preparing the fiſhing tackle, puſhed off to ſeek amuſement. When they returned with their ſpoils, Mr. Edgerton, catching at a rope which was thrown to them from on board, miſſed his aim, and unfortunately fell into the ſea: Auguſtus jumped in, and ſuſtained him till he could receive further aſſiſtance.—My brother retired to the

the cabin, a freſh gale ſprung from the ſouthward, and brought them preſently to Dover.—Sydney landed firſt, took poſt-horſes, and ſet off inſtantly.—Some buſineſs that required diſpatch detained him ſeveral days in London; and Frederick, hearing we were at Bath, reached us a fortnight before him.—"My dear Sydney, continued he, you muſt now permit me to expreſs that gratitude, which you have hitherto ſo ſtudiouſly avoided."

"Ceaſe, I beg of you, my friend—A man never looks ſo fooliſh as when liſtening to acknowledgements:—the ſervice I was ſo fortunate to render you humanity enforced, and any other in your ſituation ſhould have received: but Mr. Edgerton had a double claim to my aſſiſtance; and my life were well loſt for the father of my Emma."

Laſt week the marquis received his bride, and we attended him to the altar, where again, we ſhortly ſhall ap-

pear, and give Emma to Auguſtus. Amid theſe pleaſures, my dear Willis, I regret your abſence; — but if no inducement can prevail on you to viſit Bath, let me hope, that on our return to H—, you will no longer refuſe to join us, and to heighten the enjoyments of

Your ever faithful

HENRY EDGERTON.

LETTER L.

AUGUSTUS SYDNEY, Eſq. to Sir GEORGE DANVERS.

AWAY with thoſe gloomy mortals who tell us felicity was not made for man: — I have been theſe three days a convincing proof of the fallacy of their boaſted reaſoning—Emma is mine as indiſſolubly as the prieſt can make her.—There, Danvers, if that ſentence

ſentence is not ſufficient to ſilence theſe arguers, may the world follow my example, and from experience confute them:—but above all things, let us be careful, my dear George, to cultivate an habitual chearfulneſs of diſpoſition, which will blunt the ſting of adverſity, and give new charms to happineſs.

FINIS.

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